MANIPULATING MATTER: FIGURAL STUCCO SCULPTURE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

by
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Abstract

Stucco relief was an essential component of many of the most elaborate and luxurious decorative programs produced in western Europe during the early Middle Ages. This dissertation explores the conceptual and ideological dimensions of stucco's use as a material for figural sculpture from the fifth century to the eleventh, and in four chapters, examines four monuments where sculpture in stucco appears as a part of a larger, multimedia decorative program. The case studies are: the fifth-century Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna, the eighth-century *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale del Friuli, the ninth-century *Westwerk* in Corvey, and the eleventh-century St. Ulrich Chapel in Müstair. Methodologically, the project blends aspects of traditional iconography with approaches developed in material culture studies. It uses hagiographies, sermons, poems, histories, and other period texts to reconstruct the culturally specific connotations stucco carried at each site. In doing so, it provides four accounts of the diverse meanings a single, often overlooked, artistic material could evoke in distinctly different contexts.

In the four monuments analyzed in this dissertation, stucco relief is by turns associated with the account of the Creation of Man from mud in Genesis 2, deployed to articulate a fundamental difference between divine and earthly modes of existence, used to simulate a sense of antiquity, and adopted as the visual signature of a single patron. The multiplicity of meanings enabled by a particular artistic material is in keeping with a larger medieval habit of thinking in which materials were multivalent. However, this study argues that, in the case of stucco relief, it was not inert matter but the actions to which matter was subjected that were the richest sources of meaning. By locating meaning not in the raw materials of art but in the actions used to shape and exhibit

materials, the study provides a model for theorizing materials that foregrounds human agents as makers of art. It argues for the need to keep human acts of mediation at the center of the discussion of medieval materiality and for a larger methodological imperative to treat the materials of medieval art historically.

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Abbreviations

CCCM . . . . . .Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis

CCM. . . . . .Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum

CCSL. . . . . Corpus Christianorum Series Latina

CSEL. . . . . .Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

CSLP. . . . . .Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum Paravianum

MGH Auct. ant. . . . . Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi

MGH Conc. . . . . .Monumenta Germaniae Historica Concilia

MGH Epp. . . . . .Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epistulae

MGH SS. . . . . Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores

MGH Poetae. . . . . **. . .**Monumenta Germaniae Historica Poetae Latini Medii Aevi

MGH SS rer. Germ. . . . . Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi

MGH SS rer. Germ. N.S. . . . . .Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, Nova Series

MiAg. . . . . Miscellanea Agostiniana

PL. . . . . .Patrologia Latina

PG. . . . . Patrologia Graeca

REAug . . . . . Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques

SC. . . . . .Sources chrétiennes

Introduction

Figural Sculpture in the Early Middle Ages

The early Middle Ages are traditionally thought to be a historical era bereft of large-scale figural sculpture in stone. In reality, after the dissolution of the western Roman Empire, stone never fully disappeared as a material for sculpture; but the medium underwent a range of formal and functional changes, including a tendency toward abstraction and flatter forms. Low-relief stone carving persisted on liturgical furnishings inside buildings, but deep figural reliefs in stone on the exteriors of buildings did not reappear until the Romanesque cathedrals of the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries.[1] In part, the production of sculpture in stone may have declined in response to Christian concerns over pagan cult practices, idolatry, and the implications of the Second Commandment; however, changes in patronage practices and taste also played a role.[2]

While stone's popularity as a material for sculpture did wane between the fifth and eleventh centuries, stucco's use as a material for sculpture never fell out of fashion. Indeed, the earliest preserved monumental figural sculptures from the Middle Ages are made of stucco. Used primarily for reliefs rather than free-standing statues, medieval

[1] For canonical approaches to the problem of the "rebirth" of sculpture see: Harald Keller, "Zur Entstehung der sakralen Vollskulptur in der ottonischen Zeit," in *Festschrift für Hans Jantzen*, ed. Kurt Bauch (Berlin: Mann, 1951), 71–91; Hubert Schrade, "Zur Frühgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Monumentalplastik," *Westfalen* 35 (1957): 33–64. For more recent discussions, see: Meyer Schapiro, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*, ed. Linda Seidel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 3–33; M.F. Hearn, *Romanesque Sculpture: The Revival of Monumental Stone Sculpture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981); Beate Fricke, *Ecce Fides: die Statue von Conques, Götzendienst, und Bildkultur im Westen* (Munich: Fink, 2007), 105–111.

[2] Already in the nineteenth century, Aloïs Riegl observed that the movement away from fully three-dimensional statuary toward flatter reliefs antedates Christianity's rise in the fourth century. There is no reason to link the tendency toward abstraction and relief apparent in Late Antique sculpture solely to the rise of Christianity. On its own, the threat of pagan idolatry and rise of Christianity thesis does not fully explain the changes in what sculpture looked like and how it was used in Late Antiquity. Aloïs Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. Rolf Winkes (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1985), 76–80.

stucco was regularly painted in vibrant colors and gilded. Juxtaposed to mosaic, fresco, and marble revetment, stucco relief was an essential component of many of the most elaborate and luxurious multimedia decorative programs produced in western Europe during the early Middle Ages.

This dissertation investigates the conceptual dimensions of stucco's use as a material for sculpture during the early Middle Ages, and in four chapters, examines four monuments in which figural sculpture in stucco appears as an essential component of a larger multimedia decorative program. Dating from the fifth century to the eleventh, the monuments span a historical period that is, by and large, without monumental sculpture in stone. The case studies are: the fifth-century Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna [Fig. 1], the eighth-century Tempietto Longobardo in Cividale del Friuli [Fig. 2], the ninth-century Westwerk in Corvey [Fig. 3], and the eleventh-century St. Ulrich Chapel in Müstair [Fig. 4]. The project uses hagiographies, sermons, poems, histories, and other period texts to reconstruct the culturally specific connotations stucco carried as a material for figural sculpture at each site. In doing so, it provides four accounts of the diverse meanings a single, often overlooked, artistic material could evoke in distinctly different contexts.

The rationale that led me to pick the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna, the *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale, the *Westwerk* in Corvey, and the St. Ulrich Chapel in Müstair was twofold. First, stucco rarely appeared as a stand-alone means of decorating an architectural space. It was almost always placed within a larger scheme involving frescoes, mosaics, marble, gilding, and/or glass insets. Stucco relief cannot be interpreted in isolation from other media. An integrated approach is essential to understanding its

use, and, for this reason, I selected four monuments that featured a range of diverse media in their decorative programs. Each program had to be preserved relatively intact or, as at Corvey, enough archaeological work had to have been done to posit a plausible reconstruction of the whole. Second, at each site discussed in this dissertation, stucco is used to depict human figures. Focusing exclusively on figural reliefs limited the pool of potential monuments I could have chosen, since the majority of Late Antique and early medieval stucco that survives is non-figural. It occurs primarily in the form of simple decorative borders along cornices, within soffits, and in and around windows. However, by focusing on figural reliefs, I am able to address problems of iconography more directly.

Finally, the wide temporal and geographical range of the case studies is due, in part, to the limited number of figural stucco reliefs that survive in good condition. The scarcity of well-preserved examples is unsurprising, given that stucco is by nature a "périssable et renouvelable" medium, to borrow conservator Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon's phrase.[3] Stucco is not integral to the architectural stability of a structure, and so it is easily attached to an architectural frame and just as easily removed. The few instances of early medieval figural sculpture in stucco that survive today represent only a fraction of what once existed. While this is a challenge in many ways, the scarcity of materials has driven me to perform a transregional study. The monuments examined in the present study evince just how widespread the medium's use was in the early medieval West. The chronological and geographical breadth of my examples is ultimately an advantage, because it allows me to engage with a wide range of theoretical issues, such as

[3] Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon, "Le décor de stuc autour de l'an mil: aspects techniques d'une production artistique disparue," *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 40 (2009): 286.

material iconography, the polysemy of matter, the semantics of technologies of production, and medium specificity.

State of the Field

In the past fifteen years, art historians have increasingly recognized the importance of stucco sculpture as a component of Late Antique and early medieval decorative programs and have devoted a number of studies to stylistic, technical, and terminological questions. Many studies on stucco take the form of compendia that consider stylistic traditions within discrete geographical regions. Michel Frizot's 1977 compendium of Late Antique stucco in France, *Stucs de Gaule et des provinces romaines,* set the precedent for later corpora by cataloging examples of stucco sculpture within a single geographic area for the purpose of tracing stylistic traditions and trajectories within that region.[4] Laura Pasquini's 2002 study of Italian stuccoes, *La decorazione a stucco in Italia fra Tardo Antico e Alto Medioevo*, followed Frizot's precedent by gathering extant instances of stucco relief in Italy from the fourth to the eleventh century.[5] Pasquini organized her work by location, devoting each chapter to a separate Italian city, and in this way, she emphasized the local quality of the stucco tradition at each site. The 2004 exhibition catalogue, *Le Stuc: Visage oublié de l'art médiéval*, and the 2006 volume, *Stucs et décors de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge (Ve-XIIe siècle)*, both edited by Christian Sapin, accompanied an exhibition on the Merovingian stucco from Vounneuil-sous-Biard held at the Musée Sainte-Croix in

[4] Michel Frizot, *Stucs de Gaule et des provinces romaines: motifs et techniques* (Dijon: Publication du Centre de recherches sur les techniques greco-romaines, 1977).

[5] Laura Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco in Italia fra Tardo Antico e Alto Medioevo* (Ravenna: A. Longo, 2002).

Poitiers in 2004–2005.[6] The primary purpose of both volumes was to demonstrate a continuous tradition of stucco sculpture from Antiquity to the early Middle Ages with an emphasis on France and Switzerland as regions where Roman traditions were sustained and transformed. Martina Corgnati's 2010 book, *L'arte dello stucco in Europa dalla tarda antichità all'età gotica,* provided a transregional history of the medium beginning with Late Antique Italy and ending with Gothic Germany; however, like Frizot's and Pasquini's earlier studies, Corgnati also organized her material by region and was primarily concerned with distinguishing between local and international styles.[7]

Other literature on medieval stucco has concentrated on technical aspects of production. In general, to make a stucco relief, lime ($CaCO_3$) or gypsum ($CaSO_4$) must be baked at high temperatures, pulverized into powder, and mixed with sand and water to create a viscous material that can be modeled directly onto a wall, poured into molds, or shaped with stamps. Conferences held in Hildesheim in 1995 and Bamberg in 2000 focused on how stucco reliefs were prepared, shaped, polished, and painted in the Middle Ages as well as how reliefs may be conserved today.[8]

By far the most thought-provoking technical studies on the medium have been published by Palazzo-Bertholon, who has surveyed the chemical composition of stucco

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[6] Christian Sapin (ed.), *Stucs et décors de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge (V^e^–XII^e^ siècle); Actes du colloque international tenu à Poitiers du 16 au 19 septembre 2004* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); idem. (ed.), *Le Stuc: Visage oublié de l'art médiéval (catalogue de l'exposition présentée au Musée Sainte-Croix de Poitiers, 16 septembre 2004–16 janvier 2005)* (Paris: Somogy-Éditions d'Art, 2004).

[7] Martina Corgnati, *L'arte dello stucco in Europa dalla tarda antichità all'età gotica* (Perugia: Quattroemme, 2010).

[8] Martin Hoernes (ed.), *Hoch- und spätmittelalterlicher Stuck: Material – Technik – Stil – Restaurierung; Kolloquium des Graduiertenkollegs "Kunstwissenschaft – Bauforschung – Denkmalpflege" der Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg und der Technischen Universität Berlin, Bamberg 16–18 März 2000*. (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2002); Matthias Exner (ed.), *Stuck des frühen und hohen Mittelalters: Geschichte, Technologie, Konservierung; eine Tagung des Deutschen Nationalkomitees von ICOMOS und des Dom- und Diözesanmuseums Hildesheim in Hildesheim, 15.–17. Juni 1995.* (Munich: Lipp, 1996).

reliefs at sites in France, Italy, Germany, and Spain from the fifth century to the twelfth. Her investigations have revealed that a fundamental shift occurred in the materials used to produce stucco reliefs in western Europe in the early Middle Ages.[9] In Antiquity, lime was the material of choice in the western half of the Roman Empire and is what Vitruvius recommended using.[10] Gypsum was more popular in Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean.[11] Throughout Late Antiquity lime continued to be the material used at most sites in western Europe, with the exception of a few port cities with strong ties to the eastern Mediterranean, such as Ravenna and Marseille, where gypsum was employed.[12] However, starting in the late eighth and early ninth centuries stucco workers in the West increasingly began to reject lime in favor of gypsum.[13] Although the widespread availability of gypsum in the Alps and Germany may explain its use in those regions, the material shift from lime to gypsum does not seem to have been governed exclusively by local geology.[14] Palazzo-Bertholon has identified instances where

[9] Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon, "La nature des stucs entre le V^{e} et le XII^{e} siècle dans l'Europe médiévale: confrontation de la caractérisation physico-chimique des matériaux aux contextes géologiques, techniques et artistiques de la production," in Sapin, *Stucs et décors,* 20.

[10] Vitruvius, *De architectura*, 7.3; Claudine Allag, Nicole Blanc, and Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon, "Le décor de stuc en Gaule (I^{er}–VIII^{e} siècle)," in *Décor et architecture en Gaule entre l'Antiquité et le haut Moyen Âge: Actes du colloque international, Université de Toulouse II-Le Mirail, 9–12 octobre 2008*, ed. Catherine Balmelle, Hélène Eristov and Florence Monier (Bordeaux: Aquitania, 2011), 522; Corgnati, *L'arte dello stucco*, 17; Palazzo-Bertholon, "Le décor de stuc," 287.

[11] Valentina Cabiale, "L'utilizzo del gesso nel mondo antico: alcuni esempi e osservazioni," in *I solai di gesso: Giochi artistici d'ombre dal Monferrato*, ed. Olivia Musso (Rome: Bagnasco di Montafia, 2011), 319.

[12] Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon, "Confronti tecnici e decorative sugli stucchi intorno all'VIII secolo," in *L'VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto; Atti del Convengno internazionale di studi. Cividale del Friuli, 4–7 dicembre 2008,* ed. Valentino Pace (Udine: Comune di Cividale del Friuli, 2010), 287; idem., "La nature des stucs," 26.

[13] Lisa Accurti, "Origini e sviluppi della tecnologia e del gusto dell'ornamentazione a stucco nella cultura architettonica occidentale," in *De gypso et coloribus; Atti dei corsi estivi dell'Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino (Aramengo d'Asti, 2000/1),* ed. Gian Luigi Nicola (Turin: Celid, 2002), 17; Palazzo-Bertholon, "La nature des stucs," 14.

[14] Palazzo-Bertholon, "Le décor de stuc," 289.

gypsum was imported to sites that had lime locally available, indicating that gypsum was preferred for some other reason beyond mere convenience.[15] She has suggested that the shift from lime to gypsum was driven by a change in formal sensibilities in the eighth and ninth centuries, when greater three-dimensionality in sculpture became more desirable.

Gypsum has several advantages over lime in terms of the forms it enables. It is less dense and may be modeled either while wet or carved while dry, making achieving fine details easier.[16] It dries more quickly, meaning that reliefs are faster to make, and it also tends to expand as it dries, resulting in fewer cracks and allowing for deeper reliefs. Consequently, gypsum can achieve greater plasticity and fuller forms.[17] Palazzo-Bertholon's work demonstrates that familiarity with the physical properties of materials is crucial to any study of sculpture, because the mechanics of working with a material dictate the visual effects artisans are able to achieve.[18]

Related to technical aspects of production is the question of who the craftsmen were that made the stucco reliefs at many early medieval sites. Because fresco and stucco have much in common both materially and technically and because the two media are

[15] Palazzo-Bertholon, "Confronti tecnici," 287; idem., "La nature des stucs," 26.

[16] Palazzo-Bertholon, "La nature des stucs," 15.

[17] Large reliefs are possible with lime, as at Vouneuil-sous-Biard, where the figures are each around 1.1 meters tall and 10 centimeters deep. However, the deeper the relief, the longer it takes the lime to dry, making applying it in thick amounts more difficult to manage. The drying process can be accelerated by adding plant fibers to the mixture, but, for the most part, deep sculptural reliefs are more often made from gypsum than from lime. Allag, Blanc, and Palazzo-Bertholon, "Le décor en Gaule," 522.

[18] Michael Baxandall stressed this thirty-six years ago in his work on limewood sculpture, where he argued that virtuosity requires familiarity with the limits of one's material and the capacity to work creatively within those limits. More recently, Ann-Sophie Lehmann has put forth a model based on actor-network theory in which artists, materials, and tools are considered codependent factors in production. In this, she was heavily influenced by the work of anthropologist, Tim Ingold, though Ingold is more critical of ANT than Lehmann. Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "The Matter of the Medium: Some Tools for an Art Theoretical Interpretation of Materials," in *The Matter of Art: Materials, Technologies, Meanings 1200-1700*, edited by Christy Anderson, Anne Dunlop, Pamela H. Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 26ff; Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011).

often used side-by-side in early medieval decorative programs, Adriano Peroni, among others, has suggested that the same artisans were responsible for both media at many early medieval sites.[19] Examining the polychromy on Romanesque and Gothic stuccoes in Germany, Roland Möller has also noted that pigment can be applied "in einer Art freskaler Bindung oder in Secco-Technik" and stucco reliefs "als Malerei auf einem dreidimensionalen Bildträger gelten kann."[20] Conversely, Saverio Lomartire has used Lombard legal codes to argue that woodworkers and stucco workers were often the same persons in early medieval north Italy.[21] Hans Peter L'Orange also observed that the use of a knife to carve some of the details on the stucco sculptures in the *Tempietto Longobardo* is akin to woodcarving techniques.[22] While it seems plausible that fresco painters and stucco sculptors could have been the same persons, it is equally conceivable that early medieval multimedia programs that combine fresco and stucco were produced by teams of painters and carvers working in close collaboration with each other.

The technical affinities between stucco relief and fresco painting have meant that historians of medieval art often struggle to develop an adequate vocabulary for describing the medium. As a three-dimensional form, stucco is sculptural; but as a polychromed, plaster-based material that adheres to walls, it is materially and functionally related to

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[19] Adriano Peroni, "Stucco, Pittura e Sinopie in S. Salvatore di Brescia e in S. Benedetto di Malles," in *Sinopien und Stuck im Westwerk der karolingischen Klosterkirche von Corvey*, ed. Joachim Poeschke (Münster: Rhema, 2002), 59–60.

[20] Roland Möller, "Zur Farbigkeit mittelalterlicher Stuckplastik," in Exner, *Stuck des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, 81.

[21] Saverio Lomartire, "Commacini e marmorarii: Temi e tecniche dell scultura tra VII e VIII secolo nella *Langobardia Maior,*" in *I Magistri commacini: mito e realtà del medioevo lombardo; Atti del XIX Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Varese, Como, 23–25 ottobre 2008*, ed. Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, Atti dei congressi 19 (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2009), 174.

[22] Hans Peter L'Orange, *La scultura in stucco e in pietra del Tempietto*, vol. 3 of *Il Tempietto Longobardo di Cividale* (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1979), 30.

wall painting. Stucco is an interstitial medium that falls somewhere between conventional categories of painting and sculpture. To borrow Jill Caskey's words: "Stucco reliefs constitute a multifaceted betwixt-and-between, blurring distinctions between architecture and sculpture, free-standing and architectural sculpture, and painting and sculpture."[23] Two other examples of recent scholarly attempts to invent a vocabulary to describe stucco relief further illustrate the terminology problem.

The first is Walter Studer's 2007 book on the scenes from St. Martin in Disentis, a Benedictine monastery in the canton of Graubünden in Switzerland. Archaeological excavations at Disentis uncovered over 12,000 plaster fragments of a mid-eighth-century decorative program [Fig. 5].[24] The fragments depict both ornamental motifs and figural subjects, including an Apocalypse scene featuring seven over life-size angels with trumpets and a chorus of saints. The Disentis images are highly unusual, since the scenes were painted in true fresco while the plaster was still wet, but the plaster was not applied evenly to the wall. The material beneath the figures' most prominent features, the heads and trumpets, was built up to give the areas real volume.

The Disentis fragments have long been identified in the art historical scholarship on the site as stucco reliefs, but Studer believed that the term "stucco" was inapt beyond a basic, technical sense. For him, classifying the reliefs as pure sculpture was an "imperfect and senseless" way of looking at the images.

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[23] Jill Caskey, "Liquid Gothic: The Uses of Ornament in Southern Italy," in *Reading Gothic Architecture,* ed. Matthew Reeve (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 117; see also Jürg Goll, Isabelle Plan, and Daniel Schönbächler, "Stuck ist Schmuck," in *Die Zeit Karls des Grossen in der Schweiz,* ed. Markus Riek, Jürg Goll, and Georges Descœudres (Sulgen: Bentelli, 2013), 146.

[24] Walter Studer, *Byzanz in Disentis: die Reste einer plastisch unterlegten Monumentalmalerei byzantinischer Provenienz des 8. Jahrhunderts aus dem Kloster Disentis: Schlüsselergebnisse der Forschung* (Zurich: Vdf Hochschulverlag, 2007), 8.

> Mit dem Begriff "Stuck" wurde das rund 12,000 Fragmente umfassende Disentiser Fundgut lange Zeit belegt. Dieser Begriff bezeichnet jedoch dieses Fundgut selbst in technischer Hinsicht nur bedingt. Keinesfalls vermag dieser technische Sammelbegriff das zugehörige Genre zu definieren. Bei diesem Fundgut handelt es sich um die fragmentarischen Reste von allerhöchstens 30% einer ausgedehnten und monumentalen Wandmalerei aus der Mitte 8. Jahrhunderts. Diese Malerei war zum grossen Teil mit plastischen Kubaturen in Halbplastik und Relief unterlegt. Diese plastische Unterlage verlieh der Malerei entsprechende Plastizität. Sie kann nur mit der ihr zugehörigen Malerei verstanden werden, denn sie ist rein plastisch beurteilt unvollständig und sinnlos.[25]

For Studer, the question of medium was "either/or" rather than "both/and." Studer felt compelled to pick what he believed to be the more dominant medium, painting, over the less dominant medium, sculpture. His concept of wall paintings with underlying plasticity, or paintings rendered on top of a volumetric surface, classifies the reliefs at Disentis as a special subset of fresco. It is unclear what, if anything, Studer's argument gained from compartmentalizing the Disentis images into such a discrete category, since he did not cite any primary sources that indicate that the eighth-century makers and viewers of the program at Disentis also understood divisions between painting and sculpture in the same stark way as he did.

A second example of the difficulty art historians have grappling with stucco's status as an interstitial medium is Martin Hoernes's 2005 article on the late thirteenth-century stucco sculptures from the Dollingersaal in Regensburg.[26] In Regensburg, a standing martyr, St. Oswald, an equestrian image of King Henry I, and a joust between a Christian and a pagan knight were rendered in stucco relief on the walls of a room on the upper floor of the so-called Dollinger House [Fig. 6]. Hoernes observed that although

[25] Ibid., 252.

[26] Martin Hoernes, "Dreidimensionale Wandmalerei? Die gotische Stuckausstattung des Regensburger 'Dollingersaales,'" *Verhandlungen des Historischen Vereins für Oberpfalz und Regensburg: Historischer Verein für Oberpfalz und Regensburg* 145 (2005): 19–43.

stylistically the reliefs resemble French Gothic sculpture, such as that on the cathedrals of Reims and Auxerre, thematically, the subject of a joust between a Christian and a pagan was more often executed in monumental wall painting than in sculpture in the thirteenth century.[27] Moreover, the jousting scene has no ledge or base beneath it to support it, something a stone sculptural group would require. Instead, like most stucco reliefs, the figures were affixed to the wall with metal hooks and wooden pegs, hidden from sight behind the forms, making the jousting knights look more like free-floating pictures on the wall than statues set firmly on a pedestal. Hoernes further demonstrated that a lost, two-dimensional ground line painted on the wall around the knights probably provided the original setting for the joust.[28] The painted and sculpted components of the room's decorative program were, therefore, mutually dependent on each other.

For these reasons, Hoernes titled his article "Dreidimensionale Wandmalerei?" and asked: "Waren die Stuckateure vielleicht sogar Maler, die auf dem nicht unüblichen, aber nun plastisch gestalteten Gipsgrund 'dreidimensionale Malerei' ausführten?"[29] Like Studer, Hoernes asked if it was more accurate to think of the Regensburg jousting scene as a painting that had been executed on a volumetric surface rather than as a sculptural group. However, Hoernes openly acknowledged at several points in his article that his use of the expression "three-dimensional painting" was purposefully provocative and, tongue-in-cheek, a way of smuggling a talk about sculpture into a conference about painting. Hoernes used the term to trigger a larger discussion about the relationship between painters, sculptors, and architects in the late Middle Ages.

[27] Ibid., 23–24.

[28] Ibid., 21.

[29] Ibid., 27.

For Hoernes, the fact that historical records make little reference to stucco workers as a separate group in the workforces at construction sites seemed to indicate that stucco reliefs may have been executed by craftsmen serving double-duty as both painters and sculptors.[30] However, Hoernes was careful to clarify the fact that fresco painting is not the only artistic medium that shares techniques and materials in common with stucco. Architects and stonemasons would have also been familiar with the material, since they used gypsiferous and calciferous substances for mortar and for plastering floors, walls, and ceilings.[31] Equally, as already observed, some techniques for carving stucco resemble woodcarving; and making molds for casting in plaster could also be compared to molds used for casting in metal.[32] In the end, Hoernes concluded that it is best not to hold too tightly to the idea that stucco reliefs were simply a subgenre of wall painting, since the medium also intersects in many ways with many other forms of artistic production.[33]

The existing literature on medieval stucco relief has focused almost exclusively on questions of style, production processes, and terminology. Only one brief study has attempted to consider more conceptual issues of the medium's meaning, namely Hans-Rudolf Meier's 2003 article: "Ton, Stein, und Stuck: Materialaspekte in der Bilderfrage des Früh- und Hochmittelalters."[34] Meier argued that the fact that stucco relief was produced continuously and extensively throughout the early Middle Ages when stone

[30] Ibid., 30. On the specialization of the workforce at construction sites during the Roman and Late Antique periods see: Nicole Blanc, "Les stucateurs romains: témoignages littéraires, épigraphiques, et juridiques," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 95, no. 2 (1983): 859–907; on the Lombard *collegia fabrorum* see Lomartire, "Commacini e marmorarii," 168–174.

[31] Hoernes, "Dreidimensionale Wandmalerei," 27–28.

[32] Ibid., 28.

[33] Ibid., 35.

[34] Hans-Rudolf Meier, "Ton, Stein, und Stuck: Materialaspekte in der Bilderfrage des Früh- und Hochmittelalters," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 30 (2003): 35–52.

sculpture was not indicates that stucco was perceived as a less idolatrous alternative to stone during the period. According to Meier, stucco was a humble material because it was inexpensive and fragile compared to costly and durable marble. He further posited that stucco's more neutral status had to do, in part, with the fact that the Judeo-Christian account of the creation of the first man from another friable and fictile material, mud, in Genesis 2:7 legitimized stucco's use.[35] Modeled media were associated with creating human beings not fashioning idols.[36] Although Meier's study confirmed that stucco was produced continuously in the early Middle Ages, his conclusion that stucco was a neutral substitute for stone in the period does not hold. As I will argue in this Introduction, both Late Antique and early medieval sources reveal that stucco could be associated with the creation of pagan cult statues. Stucco cannot actually be validated as a less idolatrous, alternative material.

The stylistic and technical studies listed above offer an essential foundation for my project, but I ask a different set of questions. With the exception of Meier's stimulating but flawed article, my dissertation is the first extended study of medieval stucco sculpture to investigate the conceptual and ideological dimensions of the medium's use in the early Middle Ages.

Methodology: Material Iconology

To reconstruct the connotations stucco carried as a material for sculpture at the monuments in Ravenna, Cividale, Corvey, and Müstair, I adopt an approach inspired by *Materialikonologie* studies, a methodological branch of art history that was formulated

[35] Ibid., 42.

[36] Ibid., 44.

primarily by German-speaking scholars in the 1990s.[37] Material iconology begins from the premise that every artistic material exhibits distinctive properties or attributes. Attributes can take the form of physical qualities intrinsic to materials (color, transparency, density, corruptibility, etc.) or socially constructed beliefs projected onto materials (perceived magical properties, costliness, mythical origins, etc.). Material iconology assumes, first, that makers and viewers of art habitually ascribe ideological significance to attributes and, second, to reconstruct that significance within a particular cultural context, it is necessary to consult period texts. As Ann-Sophie Lehmann has put it, materials "are embedded in a web of language on a cultural level, and it is through textual references in inventories, recipes, anecdotes, pamphlets, and poems that their meaning-making becomes most obvious to us."[38] Material iconology studies, therefore, use texts to historicize matter.

The major pitfall of the method is the same as that of traditional iconology, namely, the potential of over-simplifying the relationship between textual and material categories of evidence by mapping an interpretation gleaned from a text onto an object without rigorously examining the applicability of one to the other. To prevent such reductive applications of the method, Thomas Raff has argued that, more than simply using texts to recover the original meaning of materials in past contexts, art historians

[37] Thomas Raff, *Die Sprache der Materialien*: *Anleitung zu einer Ikonologie der Werkstoffe* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1994); Monika Wagner, ed., *ABC des Materials: Blätter des Archivs zur Erforschung der Materialikonographie* (Hamburg: Christians, 1998–2001); Monika Wagner, Dietmar Rübel, and Sebastian Hackenschmidt (ed.), *Lexikon des künstlerischen Materials: Werkstoffe der modernen Kunst von Abfall bis Zinn* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2002), esp. "Gips," 106–113; Monika Wagner and Dietmar Rübel (ed.), *Material in Kunst und Alltag* (Berlin: Akademie, 2002).

[38] Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "How Materials Make Meaning," in *Meaning in Materials, 1400-1800,* ed. Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Frits Scholten, and H. Perry Chapman (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 18.

must think further about the semantics of materials themselves.[39] Materials are both "embedded in a web of language" and constitute a language on their own. In this "*Sprache der Materialien*" materials are polyvalent. Not all interpretations suggested by period texts are equally valid, since the meanings connotated by a substance are multiple and versatile and must be interpreted in light of the larger, situational context in which the substance appears. Therefore, the textual evidence brought to bear on materials must be tempered by other factors, such as the visual effects, pictorial content, function, and location of a particular work of art.

Most scholars who have self-consciously attached the label "*Materialikonologie*" or "*Materialikonographie*" to their work have applied the approach to modern and contemporary art.[40] Nonetheless, the method is uniquely suited to the study of medieval art. Ever since the medieval philologist Friedrich Ohly put forth *Dingbedeutung* as an interpretive model in the mid-twentieth century, historians of medieval art have recognized the importance of the physical and imagined properties of things as catalysts for signification and meaning-making as well as the necessity of using period texts to reconstruct those meanings.[41] Ohly insisted that in medieval hermeneutics, things (*res*)

[39] Raff, *Sprache der Materialien*, 9.

[40] The on-line databank, "Archiv zur Erforschung der Materialikonographie," which was begun in 1996 at the University of Hamburg, is dedicated to compiling images and texts related to the ideological significance of new materials like plastics after 1945. Christian Fuhrmeister's 2001 book, *Beton, Klinker, Granit,* focuses on construction materials in Germany during the Weimar Republic and National Socialism. Juliane Bardt's 2006 *Kunst aus Papier* explores modern and contemporary uses of paper. "Archiv zur Erforschung der Materialikonographie" accessed November 16, 2015, https://www.uni-hamburg.de/Materialarchiv/home.htm; Christian Fuhrmeister, *Beton, Klinker, Granit: Material, Macht, Politik: eine Materialikonographie* (Berlin: Bauwesen, 2001); Juliane Bardt, *Kunst aus Papier: zur Ikonographie eines plastischen Werkmaterials der zeitgenössischen Kunst* (Hildesheim, Olms: 2006).

[41] Friedrich Ohly, "Vom geistigen Sinn des Wortes im Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 89, no. 1 (1958): 1–23. For further bibliography and discussion see Aden Kumler and Christopher Lakey, "*Res et significatio*: The Material Sense of Things in the Middle Ages," *Gesta* 51, no. 1 (2012): 3ff.

had multiple coexistent properties that could all potentially carry meaning; consequently, things lent themselves to numerous readings at once, depending on how they were contextualized and on how a human interpreter chose to prioritize certain properties over others.[42] The same material could sometimes inspire contradictory interpretations, *ad bonam partem* or *ad malam partem*.[43] However, the relationship between material attributes and meanings was never arbitrary; it was always based on a reconstructable pattern of thinking based on a concrete chain of associations between the shared properties of things. This interest in material attributes as bearers of meaning and the practice of using texts to get at those meanings has meant that many historians of medieval art have intuitively used material iconography or iconology without explicitly identifying the methodology as such.

There are two main reasons why the ideological dimensions of stucco as a material for medieval sculpture have not yet been satisfactorily addressed in the scholarly literature. First, a common modern misconception holds that stucco is always imitative. Stucco sculpture is perceived as a perennial substitute for stone.[44] Such an approach empties the material of any intrinsic significance. Meaning is always located somewhere

[42] Beate Fricke, "Matter and Meaning of Mother-of-Pearl: The Origins of Allegory in the Spheres of Things," *Gesta* 51, no. 1 (2012): 37; Christina Normore, "Navigating the World of Meaning," *Gesta* 51, no. 1 (2012): 19.

[43] Raff, *Sprache der Materialien*, 59.

[44] In the nineteenth century, John Ruskin and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc both expressed dislike for stucco as a material for architectural ornament, because using it to emulate other materials clashed with their shared belief that materials should be true to themselves, not imitative. Over a century later, Jean Baudrillard described stucco as an ideal material for counterfeiting. Thinking especially of the theatricality of Baroque art, he wrote: "In the churches and palaces, stucco embraces all forms, imitates all materials: velvet curtains, wooden cornices, and fleshy curves of the body. Stucco transfigures all this incredible material disorder into a single new substance, a sort of general equivalent for all the others, accruing a theatrical prestige, since it is itself a representative substance, a mirror of all the others." John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (New York: J. Wiley, 1849), 46–49; Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *The Architectural Theory of Viollet-le-Duc: Readings and Commentary*, ed. and trans. by M.F. Hearn (Boston: MIT Press, 1990), 172; Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death,* trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Sage, 1993), 50.

else, since forms modeled in stucco are thought to constantly gesture outside themselves to another, more desirable but unavailable material. Stucco's capacity for imitation is certainly important and something I will discuss at length in Chapter Three. However, my arguments in Chapters One and Two demonstrate that in the early Middle Ages stucco was frequently recognized for exactly what it was, a gypsiferous or calciferous modeled, stamped, molded, or carved relief. My project seeks to extricate early medieval stucco sculpture from a discourse that thinks solely in terms of reference, imitation, and deception.

The second reason stucco has been overlooked has to do with the fact that gypsum and plaster are barely mentioned in the Bible, and so there is no real tradition of Christian exegesis on the material.[45] Other sculptural materials could be conceptually linked to biblical verses. For example, stone could be validated by drawing attention to the trope of Christ as the cornerstone.[46] Wood was associated with the wood of the cross;[47] precious metals and gemstones were validated by descriptions of the Heavenly Jerusalem.[48] In contrast, stucco could only be linked obliquely to Christian biblical exegesis through its association with mud and clay. Nonetheless, biblical exegeses are not the only genre of textual evidence that can provide insight into a material's meanings

[45] The exception might be Deuteronomy 27:2: "On that day you cross over the Jordan into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall set up large stones and cover them with plaster." However, early medieval exegetes did not seem to find much significance in the lime in this passage. All biblical citations in this study use the translation provided in the *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha* (2007).

[46] Meier, "Ton, Stein, und Stuck," 36–37.

[47] Annika Elisabeth Fisher, "Cross, Altar, and Crucifix in Ottonian Cologne," in *Decorating the Lord's Table: On the Dynamics between Image and Altar in the Middle Ages*, ed. Søren Kaspersen and Erik Thunø (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), 49.

[48] Brigitte Buettner, "From Bones to Stones: Reflections on Jeweled Reliquaries," in *Reliquiare im Mittelalter*, ed. Bruno Reudenbach and Gia Toussaint (Berlin: Akademie, 2005), 43; Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400-ca. 1204* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 40.

in the Middle Ages. In the next two sections of the Introduction, I will offer close readings of Late Antique and early medieval treatises, poems, and histories that mention images made from gypsum. These texts reveal both the negative connotations the material could carry and its positive associations. In this way, I demonstrate how material iconology can be productive as an art historical method for understanding stucco relief as a material for sculpture.

Vilissimae Res

Most Late Antique, Christian writers perceived little difference between stucco and other materials used to make images. Early on, Tertullian (d. 225) argued that since idolatry was a sin that occurred in the heart, it could take place even without a material focus. Therefore, the formal and material nature of the physical objects on which idolaters chose to concentrate their attention mattered very little.

> For it makes no difference whether a modeler forms the idol, an engraver chisels it out or an embroiderer weaves it, because it is also not important whether the idol is made of gypsum or colors or stone or bronze or silver or thread. For since even without an idol there may be idolatry, certainly, when the idol is present, its material and formal nature makes no difference, lest one should think that only that must be regarded as an idol which has been consecrated in human shape.[49]

Arnobius of Sicca (d. 327) adopted a similar stance in his *Aduersus nationes*. In Book Six of this diatribe against pagan religion, he listed many different types of materials that could be used to produce idols: "bones, stones, brass, silver, gold, clay,

[49] Neque enim interest, an plastes effingat, an caelator exculpat, an phrygio detexat, quia nec de materia refert, an gypso, an coloribus, an lapide, an aere, an argento, an filo formetur idolum. Quando enim et sine idolo idololatria fiat, utique, cum adest idolum, nihil interest, quale sit, qua de materia, qua de effigie, ne qui putet id solum idolum habendum, quod humana effigie sit consecratum. Tertullian, *De idololatria*, 3.2, ed. August Reifferscheid and Georg Wissowa, *CCSL* 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), 1103; trans. Jan Hendrick Waszink and J.C.M. van Winden, *De Idololatria*: *Critical Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 27.

wood taken from a tree, or glue mixed with plaster" as well as many different crafting processes that could be applied to the materials:

> melted down and cast into these shapes and forms which you see, baked in potters' kilns, produced from anvils and hammers, reduced with scrapers, ground with rasps and files, cut, hewn, and hollowed out with saws, augers, axes, bored out with the turning of bits, smoothed off with planes.[50]

Though Arnobius was striving for rhetorical effect by including such lists in his treatise, his lack of a distinction between materials and artistic techniques is telling.[51] Like Tertullian, he felt the need to emphasize the irrelevance of material and technique when dealing with idols, and for this reason, he indiscriminately lumped together metal, stone, wood, and plaster in the same thought. Arnobius went on to emphasize that all images of the gods, regardless of the materials from which they were made, were all the same because they were all man-made, a common Late Antique trope. He described the self-deception required by worshiping a man-made artifact as

> stupidity to believe a god what you yourself form, to fall down on your knees in terror before a thing made by you; and while you know full well that it is the product of your work and fingers, to cast yourself down on your face, to beg aid in supplication, and in misfortunes and hard times to take recourse to its favor as of a propitious divinity?[52]

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[50] Simulacra ista quae vos terrent quaeque templis in omnibus prostrati atque humiles adoratis ossa lapides aera sunt, argentum aurum testa, lignum sumptum ex arbore aut commixtum glutinum gypso, ex ornatibus fortas|se meretriciis aut ex muliebri mundo, camellinis ex ossibus aut ex Indici animalis dente, ex caccabulis, ollulis, ex candelabris et lucernis aut ex aliis obscenioribus vasculis congesta, conflata in has species ducta sunt atque in formas quas cernitis exierunt, fornacibus incocta figulinis, ex incudibus et malleis nata, grosis rasa, discobinata de limis, serris furfuraculis asceis secta dolata effossa, terebrarum excavata vertigine, runcinarum levigata de planis. Arnobius of Sicca, *Aduersus nationes*, 6.14, ed. Concetto Marchesi, *CSLP* 93 (Turin: Paravia, 1953), 324; trans. George E. McCracken, *The Case Against the Pagans* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1949), 466.

[51] The theology in Arnobius's treatise is occasionally unorthodox, but he was familiar with classical rhetoric, as he was a teacher in the rhetorical schools in Sicca (North Africa). Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. Joseph B. Solodow (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 639.

[52] Ita iste non error est, non ut proprie dicatur amentia, deum credere quem tute ipse formaris, subplicare tremibundum fabricatae abs te rei, et cum scias et certus sis tui esse operis et digitorum partum, pronum in faciem ruere, opem rogare suppliciter adversis que in rebus atque in temporibus asperis propitii numinis favore succurrere? Arnobius, *Aduersus nationes*, 6.14, ed. Marchesi, *CSLP* 93, 325*; trans.* McCracken, *Against the Pagans*, 466.

This rhetoric would be echoed later by Prudentius, who also wrote about hollow idols that rusted, became pitted with holes, and "if it is plaster covered with sheets of pliant metal, the cement proves treacherous and gaps gradually appear."[53] A good illustration of what Prudentius might have had in mind in writing about plaster covered in cracked metal is offered by a gilded fragment of a second-century Mithras relief in stucco, found under Santo Stefano Rotondo in Rome [Fig. 7].[54]

Carolingian writers on images frequently imitated styles and ideas found in Late Antique sources.[55] As a result, Carolingian literary sources on sculptural materials approach the theme in ways that are deliberately reminiscient of early polemicists. For example, in the *Opus Caroli regis*, Theodulf of Orléans (ca. 750–821) adopted a writing style that echoes Tertullian and Arnobius by using a list to emphasize the irrelevance of both material and technique.

> Here are many images that are distinguished [from one another], some of which are made up of dyed colors, some are cast of gold and silver, some are formed from wood with a carver's knife, some are carved in marble, some are modeled from gypsum or clay.[56]

Like his predecessors, Theodulf knew that there were many ways to make images, but at the same time he implied that such distinctions between materials and techniques

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[53] mollis si brattea gypsum texerat, infido rarescit gluttine sensim; si formam statuae lamnis commisit aenis lima terens, aut in partem caua membra grauato pondere curuantur, scabra aut aerugo peresam conficit effigiem crebro que foramine rumpit. Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 1.436–441, ed. M.P. Cunningham *CCSL* 126 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966), 201; trans. H.J. Thomson, *Prudentius*, Loeb Classical Library 387, ed. Jeffery Henderson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 383.

[54] Elisa Lissi-Caronna, *Il Mitreo dei Castra Peregrinorum: S. Stefano Rotondo* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 11–14.

[55] Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 77.

[56] Ecce cernuntur plures stare imagines, quarum quaedam sunt colorum fucis conpaginatae, quaedam auro argentove conflatae, quaedam in ligno caelatoris scalpello figuratae, quaedam in marmore incisae, quaedam in gypso vel testa formatae. Theodulf of Orléans, *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum (Libri Carolini)*, 1.2.29, ed. Ann Freeman, *MGH Conc. 2, Suppl. 2* (Hannover: Hahn, 1998), 117.

ultimately mattered very little. He enumerated textiles, metalwork, wood and stone carvings, and modeled figures together in a single passage. All artistic materials and media were physically different yet conceptually equal.[57]

That is not, however, to suggest that there was no perceived hierarchy between artistic materials in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Although Arnobius considered all materials equally worthless in a spiritual sense, elsewhere in his treatise he distinguished between materials in an economic sense.

> But as soon as they [the raw materials] receive human forms – ears, noses, cheeks, lips, eyes, eyebrows – straightway they become gods and are entered in the rank and catalogue of the heaven dwellers? Does fashioning of them add anything new to these bodies, that from this addition you are made to think something divine and majestic has been conferred? Does it change bronze to gold, or compel the cheap earthenware to change into silver?[58]

When Arnobius acknowledged that gold was more valuable than bronze and silver more valuable than terracotta, he introduced a hierarchy based on relative costliness, an idea that comes out at another point in his treatise when he identified plaster and clay as the *vilissimae res*, the most worthless things.

> Do your gods, then, dwell in plaster and terracotta? Indeed, are the gods the minds, spirits, and souls of the terracottas and the plaster? And to make the meanest of things (*vilissimae res*) more august, do they allow themselves to be shut up and to lurk in the confinement of an obscure abode? […] What do the gods seek in the terracottas that they prefer them to their seats among the stars?[59]

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[57] In this, I differ from Meier's reading of the passage. Meier sees the fact that gypsum and clay are mentioned together and are both listed after stone as evidence that Theodulf was presenting modeled materials in direct contradistinction to stone. However, the fact that precious metalwork, wood carvings, and woven images are also listed in the passage makes Meier's assertion that Theodulf was setting up a strict binary between stone and modeled materials unlikely.

[58] ea formas si accipiant hominum, si auriculas nasos buccas labra oculos cilia, continuo dii fiant et in ordinem caelitum referantur et censum? Novitatis aliquid fictio corporibus his addit, ut adiectione ipsa cogamini aliquid eis credere divinitatis maiestatis que conlatum? In aurum aes mutat aut testulae vilitatem in argenteam cogit degenerare materiam? Arnobius, *Aduersus nationes*, 6.15*,* ed. Marchesi, *CSLP* 93, 326; *trans.* McCracken, *Against the Pagans*, 467.

[59] In gypso ergo mansitant atque | in testulis dii vestri, quinimmo testularum et gypsi mentes, spiritus atque animae dii sunt? Atque ut fieri augustiores vilissimae res possint, concludi se patiuntur et in sedis obscurae coercitione latitare? […] Et quid in testulis dii petunt, ut eas sedibus sidereis anteponant? Ibid., 6.17, ed.

Writing nearly a century later in his commentary on Psalm 134, Augustine (354–430) also promoted a material hierarchy, asserting that idols made from materials like plaster and clay were less worthy of notice than those made from precious metals.

> The Spirit wants to inculcate in us contempt for all these idols of the pagans. Will he then point out that they are no more than stone or wood, plaster or clay? "No," he says, "I will not speak of those; they are all made of base materials. I prefer to speak of what the pagans love and prize most highly." The idols of the gentiles are fashioned of silver and gold. Yes, it is certainly gold, it is certainly silver, and they are bright, shiny substances, gold and silver. But does their reflection of the light mean that they have eyes and can see? By no means. Perhaps, being gold and silver, they are useful to a person with an eye to profit but not to one who is bound to God. Or, to put it more accurately, they are not useful even to one who is avaricious but only to one who makes good use of them and by charitable donations gains a title to treasure in heaven. But in any case, these things lack all sensation. So how can you, who are human, make them your gods?[60]

In Augustine's mind, only idols made from the most valuable substances, gold and silver, were worth contending with because these materials at least were luminous and had an inherent economic value.[61] Idols made from plaster and clay, along with wood and stone, were almost too humble to be objects of contempt.

Reading Augustine's account, one might be tempted to accept Meier's thesis that gypsum was indeed perceived as being a base, inexpensive material and therefore, a

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ibid., 329–330*; trans.* ibid., 470.

[60] idola gentium dicturus erat fortasse, ut contemneremus ista omnia; dicturus erat idola gentium, lapides et ligna, gypsum et testam? non haec dico; uilis materia est, illud quod ualde amant, uel quod ualde honorant dico. idola gentium argentum et aurum. certe aurum est, certe argentum est; numquid quia lucet argentum, lucet aurum, ideo oculos habent et uident? sic, quomodo argentum est, quomodo aurum est, utile forte auaro, non religioso; immo uero nec auaro utile, sed utile bene utenti, et per eius erogationem caelestem thesaurum adquirenti; tamen nunc cum ista insensata sint, quid facitis homines de argento et auro deos? Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* 134.23.7–18, ed. Eligius Dekkers and Johannes Fraipont, *CCSL* 40 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1956), 1955; trans. Maria Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms, 121–150,* Vol. III/20 of *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century,* ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2004), 211.

[61] On the luminosity of precious metals and the binary between gold and base materials in twelfth-century discussions of the cult of relics see: Bruno Reudenbach, "'Gold ist Schlamm': Anmerkungen zur Materialbewertung im Mittelalter," in Wagner and Rübel, *Material in Kunst und Alltag*, 8–9.

neutral alternative to stone sculpture in the early Middle Ages. However, Augustine's commentary does not suggest that plaster and clay were never used for idols, just that idols made from such materials were easy to criticize. Moreover, nothing about the passage suggests that stucco was perceived in a way different from stone. Stone and wood were base materials that had an equivalent value to gypsum and clay.

In other words, two currents of thought coexisted in Late Antiquity regarding the materials of sculpture. Such Early Christian polemicists as Tertullian held that all sculptural materials were equal in the sense that they were all equally worthless. Other writers, such as Augustine, ranked materials based on such qualities as their varying degrees of hardness, incorruptibility, luminosity, and economic value. Inexpensive and friable materials like plaster and clay occupied the lowest position in these hierarchies. However, the authors that I have just cited should not be read literally. All were following established rhetorical conventions when composing their texts. The writers' insistence on gypsum as a material for idols was a formulaic device. It served a literary purpose by adding another layer of self-delusion to the practice of idolatry. Not only did idolaters mistake a man-made statue for a god, but they also mistook a cheap, common substance for something valuable or extraordinary. Saying that an idol was made from plaster amplified the inherent foolishness of the practice of idolatry. From a literary perspective, then, gypsum was one of the best materials from which an idol could be made, because it rendered the idol an easy target for ridicule. Stucco could be perceived as a cheap and humble material, but this perception did not make it a neutral alternative to stone sculpture; rather, it made idols made from stucco all the more contemptible. To

suggest that stucco was perceived as an acceptable alternative to stone in the early Middle Ages would be to ignore this valence of meaning in the literary sources.

Finally, at least one text from the the early twelfth century indicates that the practice of using gypsum as a literary marker of an image's material worthlessness continued in later centuries. Written around 1125, Guibert of Nogent's *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus* documents the existence of a speaking crucifix made from plaster. The account details how an acolyte jokingly addressed the crucifix during the middle of a Mass in which he was participating.

> Standing near the front of the apse – that is, between the apse and the altar – on a particular ceremonial day at the hour of the mass, ready to participate in the office, he [the acolyte] was holding the paten and the host that was to be offered. A plaster image (*imago … gipsea*) hung at the front of the chancel that bore the likeness of the crucified Lord, not far from the tomb of Quentin the martyr. And while he was standing by this image and holding the offering, he said to the image, with words as juvenile as his thoughts, "Lord do you want some of my bread?" Christ deigned to answer him most clearly, "I will shortly give you some of my bread." A disease stuck the boy when he heard these words, and a few days later he divested himself of the human form that he had held so briefly and became a possessor of heavenly robes. Now he is buried before the image that made this promise to him.[62]

At first glance, the suggestion that the material specificity in this passage indicates that the sculpture is worthless seems irreconcilable with the fact that the sculpture in question is a miraculous speaking crucifix. However, the passage must be interpreted in the context of Guibert's larger project. Guibert wrote *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus* as a

[62] Is ante absidis frontem, inter altare videlicet ac absidem, quadam sollenni die hora sacrificii pro officio acturus astiterat, patenam autem cum hostia quae erat offerenda gerebat. Imago denique a fronte cancelli gipsea, crucifixi domini speciem preferens, eminebat, quae non longe a Quintini martyris sepulcro distabat. Cumque imagini assisteret et offerenda deferret, puerili tam verbo quam sensu ad imaginem dixit: "Vultis", ait, "domine, de pane meo?" Cui ille evidentissime respondere dignatur: "Ego", ait, "in proximo tibi de meo pane dabo." Qui his auditis morbo corripitur et infra dies paucissimos suo quem brevi tenuerat exutus homunculo compos trabeae celestis efficitur et ante imaginem, quae id sibi spoponderat, sepelitur. Guibert of Nogent, *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus*, 1.214–224, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, *CCCM* 127 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), 92; trans. Joseph McAlhany and Jay Rubenstein, Monodies *and* On the relics of saints*: the Autobiography and a Manifesto of a French Monk from the Time of the Crusades* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 200.

critique of the contemporary cult of saints.[63] In particular, he disapproved of the practice of indiscriminately elevating to the status of a saint anyone who had been involved in a miracle. Guibert argued that not everyone involved in miracles was worthy of veneration. He explained, "portents pass through some people as if through canals, but the people themselves have no share in these signs, even though through these signs they perform a service for the benefit of others"[64]

Guibert's anecdote about the acolyte and the plaster crucifix demonstrates this point. The acolyte behaves irreverantly, hears a crucifix reprimand him, and dies. He is one of the "canals" through which portents pass, but the boy himself does nothing to earn the honor. The gypsum crucifix should be understood in the same way. The image is a means through which something miraculous is enacted; what makes it miraculous is the divine decision to use it in this way, not its material or formal nature.

Guibert went out of his way to state that the crucifix was made of gypsum, although many surviving medieval literary sources that mention images do not specify materials.[65] His decision to provide the extra detail is significant. The meaning of the gypsum in the passage is clarified by how Guibert prefaced his anecdote, namely by paraphrasing Romans 9:21: "the potter has the ability to make a vessel for honor or for shame."[66] Gypsum and clay were both fictile materials, and the fact that the crucifix in

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[63] Thomas Head, "Guibert of Nogent, *On Saints and Their Relics*," in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York: Garland, 2000), 401.

[64] Sunt enim quidam, per quos acsi canales eadem portenta feruntur et dum per haec aliorum utilitati militant, ipsi eorum quae per eos fiunt exortes habentur. Guibert, *De sanctis*, 1.167–169, ed. Huygens, *CCCM* 127, 91; trans. McAlhany and Rubenstein, *On the relics of saints,* 198.

[65] Signe Horn Fuglesang, "Christian Reliquaries and Pagan Idols," in *Images of Cult and Devotion: Function and Reception of Christian Images in Medieval and Post-Medieval Europe,* ed. Ulla Haastrup, R.E. Greenwood, and Søren Kaspersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2004), 8.

[66] figuli enim est potentiae facere vas in honorem, facere in contumeliam. Guibert, *De sanctis*, 1.205, ed. Huygens, *CCCM* 127, 92; trans. McAlhany and Rubenstein, *On the relics of saints,* 200. Romans 9:21

this passage is made from gypsum invited Guibert's readers to connect the crucifix back to the ceramic vessels in Romans 9. Guibert used gypsum as a marker to indicate that without divine intervention, there was nothing inherently special about the crucifix, just as there was nothing extraordinary about the clay in Romans 9 without the potter's interventions and nothing extraordinary about the irreverant young acolyte who nonetheless "became a possessor of heavenly robes." The gypsum in this passage, as in the earlier texts, identifies the statue as an object that has no intrinsic value.

Gipsea metalla sculpta

The literary perception of stucco as a worthless material is at odds with how the medium was actually employed in the early Middle Ages. Stucco relief was used for portraits of popes, bishops, abbesses, and kings [Fig. 8].[67] The medium appears in buildings commissioned by some of the most affluent patrons of the time and is frequently juxtaposed with costly materials.[68] My four case studies illustrate this point. The decorative program of the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna was an episcopal commission, authorized by Bishop Neon in the third quarter of the fifth century. The

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reads: "Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one object for special use and another for ordinary use?"

[67] John the Deacon mentions a stucco tondo portrait of Gregory the Great in Rome: *Sed et in absidula post fratrum cellarium Gregorius ejusdem artificis magisterio in rota gypsea pictus ostenditur, statura justa et bene formata*. John the Deacon, *Sancti Gregorii Magni Vita*, 4.48, ed. J.P. Migne, *PL* 75 (Paris: 1849), col. 230B. On this pope portrait and the portrait of St. Ambrose it likely inspired in Milan, see Corgnati, *L'arte dello stucco*, 13; On the abbess effigies in stucco in Quedlinburg, see Karen Blough, "The Abbatial Effigies at Quedlinburg: A Convent's Identity Reconfigured," *Gesta* 47, no. 2 (2008): 147–169; On the stucco statue of Charlemagne in Müstair, see Roland Böhmer, "Die Stuckfigur Karls des Grossen in Müstair," *Kunst + Architektur in der Schweiz* 48, no. 4 (1997): 62–65.

[68] Bea Leal has recently critiqued the idea that stucco was a low status material. Surveying monuments in Italy and Syria in the eighth century, she observed: "One of the most striking impressions in each case is the richness of the decorations, with large areas of plaster shaped into carpets of flowers or multi-coloured and high-relief pattererned frames, embodying abundance and luxury, and it is clear that in the 8th century stucco was treated, on both sides of the Mediterranean, as a prestige material in its own right." Bea Leal, "The Stuccoes of San Salvatore, Brescia, in their Mediterranean Context," in *Dalla corte regia al monastero di San Salvatore-Santa Giulia di Brescia*, ed. Gian-Pietro Brogiolo and Francesca Morandini (Mantua: Società archeologica padana, 2014), 245.

extensive use of gold mosaic and marble revetment in the Baptistery indicate that money was no obstacle. Similarly, the *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale del Friuli was most likely commissioned by a royal couple, and again, the extensive use of marble and glass in other parts of the program testifies to the luxurious nature of the commission. The *Westwerk* at Corvey was an addition to an affluent monastery with strong ties to the Carolingian royal family, and the St. Ulrich's Chapel in Müstair was part of a bishop's residence. There is no reason to assume that the use of stucco in any of these monuments indicates that limited resources compelled patrons to cut corners and settle for something that they perceived to be a low status material.

The fact that stucco relief could be a greatly admired medium in the early Middle Ages emerges in Agnellus of Ravenna's ninth-century *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Rauennatis*. This collection of biographies of Ravenna's early bishops is supplemented with detailed descriptions of the churches and monumental commissions they built. At several points in the text, Agnellus used the term "*metallum*" to describe the stucco reliefs in some of these buildings. In Chapter 23, he described the stucco in the Ursiana basilica: "here and there they carved in stucco (*gipseis metallis*) different allegorical images of men and animals and quadrupeds."[69] In Chapter 41 on Santa Croce, the decoration Galla Placidia ordered was "constructed of most precious stones and with carved stucco (*gipsea metalla sculpta*)."[70] Similarly, in Chapter 86 on Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Agnellus recorded that Archbishop Agnellus (a different person from Agnellus

[69] hinc atque illinc gipseis metallis diuersa hominum animalium que et quadrupedum enigmata inciderunt et ualde optime composuerunt. Agnellus of Ravenna, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Rauennatis*, 23.22–25, ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, *CCCM* 199 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 170; trans. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, *The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 119.

[70] Galla uero augusta aedificauit ecclesiam sanctae Crucis, preciosissimis lapidibus structam et gipsea metalla sculpta. Ibid., 41.407, ed. ibid., 200; trans. ibid., 149.

the historian) "decorated the apse and both side walls with images in mosaic of processions of martyrs and virgins; indeed he laid over this stucco covered with gold (*suffixa uero metalla gipsea auro superinfixit*)."[71]

The term *metallum* has long been a subject of scholarly speculation.[72] Isidore of Seville (536–636) associated the term with metal and marble.[73] However, as Erik Thunø and others have demonstrated, *metallum* can be linked specifically to the medium of glass mosaic, because the word appears in many dedicatory inscriptions in monumental mosaic programs. Consequently, *metallum* is often treated as a synonym of *musivus*.[74] For example, in the church of Ss. Cosma e Damiano (ca. 526–530), the apse inscription reads: "With bright mosaics (*speciosa metallis*), the splendid hall of God shines, in which the precious light of faith flashes even more radiantly."[75] Likewise, in the Eufrasian Basilica in Poreč, the inscription beneath the main apse records that before Bishop Eufrasius

[71] tribunal et utrasque parietes de imaginibus martirum uirginum que incedentium tessellis decorauit; suffixa uero metalla gipsea auro superinfixit, lapidibus uero diuersis parietibus adhaesit et pauimentum lithostratis mire composuit. Ibid., 86.60–65, ed. ibid., 253; trans. ibid., 200.

[72] Eve Borsook, "Rhetoric or Reality: Mosaics as Expressions of a Metaphysical Idea," in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 44, no. 1 (2000): 4–5.

[73] Metallum est ubi exules deportantur ad eruendam uenam marmora que secanda in crustis. […] Metallum dictum Graece μεταλλαυ, quod natura eius sit ut ubi una uena apparuerit, ibi spes sit alterius inquirendi. Septem sunt autem genera metallorum: aurum, argentum, aes, electrum, stagnum, plumbum et, quod domat omnia, ferrum. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W.M. Lindsay, *Etymologiarvm sive originvm liber XX* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1911), 5.27.31 and 16.17.1.

[74] Erik Thunø, "Materializing the Invisible in Early Medieval Art: The Mosaic of Santa Maria in Domnica in Rome," in *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Giselle de Nie, Karl F. Morrison, and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 267; idem., "Inscription and Divine Presence: Golden Letters in the Early Medieval Apse Mosaic," *Word and Image* 27, 3 (2011): 286; idem., *The Apse Mosaic in Early Medieval Rome: Time, Network, and Repetition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 50ff; see also Christa Belting-Ihm, "Zum Verhältnis von Bildprogrammen und Tituli in der Apsisdekoration früher westlicher Kirchenbauten," in vol. 2 of *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo: 15–21 aprile 1993,* ed. Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 41 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1994), 869–872.

[75] AVLA D[E]I CLARIS RADIAT SPECIOSA METALLIS IN QVA PLVS FIDEI LVX PRETIOSA MICAT. Latin transcription and adapted English translation taken from the appendix provided by Thunø, "Inscription and Divine Presence," 289.

renovated the church, the building was "*carens metallo*" or without metal or shine.[76] When Eufrasius finished his project, the church was "shining with varied metals" (*vario fulgere metallo*).[77] Ann Terry and Henry Maguire discussed the ambiguity of the use of "*metallum*" in this inscription at length, but ultimately inferred that in this context the word referred primarily to the mosaics. However, Agnellus' use of *metallum* to describe stucco reliefs in Ravenna indicates that the term cannot be translated exclusively as a synonym of *musivus*. It should be understood to refer much more broadly to a material or medium's metallic qualities, such as its costly nature or its polished, reflective surface.

In fact, when Agnellus used *metallum* to describe stucco, he may have been alluding to the fact that in some cases the relief was literally gilded. Earlier Roman instances of gilded stucco sculptures survive, such as in the Tomb of the Valerii in Rome (ca. 160 CE) and the Mithras relief from Santo Stefano Rotondo [see Fig. 7].[78] Traces of gilding have been found on fragments of stucco relief in the excavations of the basilica of Sta. Croce in Ravenna, dating to the time of Galla Placidia in the first half of the fifth century.[79] Traces of red paint on the sixth century stucco frieze in Santa Maria Antiqua

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[76] HOC FVIT IMPRIMIS TEMPLVM QVASSANTED RVINÂ TERRIBIS LAPSV, NEC CERTO ROBORE FIRMVM: EXIGVO MAGNOQVE CARENS TVM FIRMA METALLO: SED MERITIS TANTVM PENDEBANT PVTRIA TECTA: VT VIDIT SVBITO LAPSVRAM PONDERE SEDEM, PROVIDVS, ET FIDEI FERVENS ARDORE, SACERDOS EVPHRASIVS SANCTA PRÆCESSIT MENTE RVINAM: LABENTES MELIVS REDITVRAS DIRVIT ÆDES: FVNDAMENTA LOCANS EREXIT CVLMINA TEMPLI. QVAS CERNIS NVPER VARIO FVLGERE METALLO PERFICIENS CÆPTVM DECORAVIT MVNERE MAGNO: ÆCCLESIAM SIGNANS VOCITAVIT NOMINE XSTI: CONGAVDENS OPERE SIC FELIX VOTA PEREGIT. Latin transcription taken from Ann Terry and Henry Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 98.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Harald Mielsch and Henner von Hesberg, *Die Mausoleen E–I und Z–PSI*, vol. 2 of *Die heidnische Nekropole unter St. Peter in Rom*, Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia 16 (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1995), 161.

[79] Gino Pavan, "Il problema della decorazione a stucco nelle basiliche ravennati," in *Lo stucco da Bisanzio a Roma barocca: Ravenna e l'Emilia Romagna, I segni di una tradizione ininterrotta*, ed. Silvano Onda, Sonia Celeghin, and Daniele Vistoli (Venice: Il Cardo, 1996), 156; Laura Pasquini, "I 'gipsea metalla' di

have led David Knipp to speculate that the red pigment was a ground for gilding, i.e. used as a bole.[80] Likewise, in the stucco frieze in the south vestibule of Hagia Sophia, the sections of raised relief are thought to have been gilded while the background was painted blue.[81] However, Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis has suggested that the term *metallum* could have been applied to stucco relief even when it was not gilded.[82] The fact that Agnellus clarified the fact that the stucco in Sant'Apollinare Nuovo was not only "*metalla*" but also had "*auro superinfixit*" implies that *metallum* denoted a characteristic of stucco distinct from gilding. Therefore, in cases where stucco was merely polychromed but not gilded, the term *metallum* could have been applied as a rhetorical flourish, intended to raise the prestige of the monument by attaching an adjective denoting preciousness to the stucco.

Metallum could also refer to the visual effects of a relief. Comprising ridges and dips, reliefs naturally provide undulating surfaces that are struck unevenly by light. In the same way, early medieval mosaicists were concerned with using surface irregularities as a means of manipulating light, and indeed, almost every time *metallum* is used to describe a mosaic in an early medieval *titulus*, it is associated with the mosaic's capacity to shimmer and reflect light.[83] The effect produced by a stucco relief is not identical to that of a mosaic, but medieval viewers could have nonetheless perceived parallels

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Santa Croce," in *La Basilica di Santa Croce: nuovi contributi per Ravenna tardoantica*, ed. Massimiliano David (Ravenna: Edizioni del Girasole, 2013), 49.

[80] David Knipp, "Coptic Stuccoes in Santa Maria Antiqua," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artivm historiam pertinentia* 25 (2012): 161.

[81] Ibid.; W.R. Lethaby and Harold Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople: A Study in Byzantine Building* (London: Macmillan, 1894), 291–292.

[82] In her glossary entry on *gipsea metalla*, written to accompany her translation of the *LPR*, Deliyannis clarifies that the term "means stucco, without assuming that *metalla* must indicate some sort of metallic coating." Deliyannis, *The Book of Pontiffs,* 325.

[83] Thunø, "Inscription and Divine Presence," 289–291.

between the way reliefs and mosaics animated the walls they decorated. Agnellus' use of the term *metallum* could signal stucco relief's capacity to play with light.

Agnellus is not the only historian who implied that stucco relief and glass mosaic were comparable media in early medieval decorative programs. A late ninth- or early-tenth-century list of the abbots of Fleury, the *Catalogus abbatum Floriacensium*, makes little distinction between the "flowering" stuccoes and mosaics in Theodulf of Orléans' ninth-century oratory in Germigny-des-Prés. I will discuss this text in greater detail at the beginning of Chapter Three. Likewise, a late tenth-century account of the deeds of Abbot Witigowo of Reichenau (985–997) by Purchard of Reichenau also describes a church supported on arches covered in "variegated forms and vernal flowers" made from carved gypsum.[84] The most remarkable aspect of Purchard's description is the fact that it is based on an earlier formula from Prudentius' *Peristephanon* which describes the arcades in San Paolo fuori le mura covered in glass, not stucco: "Then he covered the curves of the arches with splendid glass (*hyalo*) of different hues, like meadows that are bright with flowers in the spring."[85] The slippage between the glass in the Late Antique model and the stucco in the Ottonian adaptation indicates, again, that mosaic and stucco were perceived to be equally precious media in the early Middle Ages.

[84] Omni structura diverso stemmate fulta, / Ut dominus voluit, festinans ipse paravit / Huic arcus camyros et subdidit undique sculptos / Gipso sub variis et verno flore figuris. Purchard, *Gesta Witigowomnis*, ver. 388–391, ed. Karl Strecker, *MGH Poetae* 5 (Leipzig: K. W. Hiersemann, 1937) 274; Walter Berschin and Johannes Staub, *Die Taten des Abtes Witigowo von der Reichenau (985-997): Eine zeitgenössische Biographie von Purchart von der Reichenau* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1992), 52–55.

[85] Tum camiros hyalo insigni uarie cucurrit arcus; sic prata uernis floribus renident. Prudentius, *Liber Peristefanon,* 12.53–54, ed. Cunningham, *CCSL* 126, 380; trans. Thomson, *Prudentius*, 327; Berschin and Staub, *Die Taten des Abtes Witigowo,* 9, 54; For discussion of the arches in S. Paolo fuori le mura, which were probably lined in stucco relief, making Prudentius' identification of the material as glass all the more interesting, see Herbert L. Kessler, "Séroux's Decadent Column Capital and Other Pieces in the Puzzle of S. Paolo Fuori le Mura in Rome," *Arte medievale n.s.* 3, no. 1 (2004): 9–13.

Finally, a life of the early Carolingian abbot, Angilbert, written by Abbot Anscherus in the eleventh century, describes the architecture and decorative program of the late eighth-century abbey of St-Riquier. Among other details, Anscherus mentions four biblical scenes made from gypsum, which depicted the Passion at the central crossing of the church, the Ascension to the north, the Resurrection to the south, and the Nativity near the doors.[86] The scenes were "*mirifico opere ex gipso figuratae et auro musivo aliisque pretiosis coloribus pulcherrime compositae sunt*," which Susan Rabe has suggested indicates a mixed media technique, where the figures were polychromed stucco but the backgrounds were executed in gold mosaic.[87] Such descriptors as wonderful (*mirifico*), costly (*pretiosis*), and beautifully (*pulcherrime*) indicate that Anscherus attached no stigma to stucco as an artistic medium.

Another eleventh-century text from St-Riquier, Hariulf's copy of Angilbert's eighth-century *libellus,* mentions that the four scenes served as stopping points during liturgical processions, but it does not identify the materials from which the images were made.[88] Corgnati has suggested that the difference between Anscherus' and Hariulf's accounts could have something to do with the fact that Hariulf's text was a more direct copy of Angilbert's original, late eighth-century *libellus* recounting the liturgy at St-Riquier. She argued that in the eighth-century description, it would not have been necessary to go into great detail regarding the appearance of the images in the church.

[86] In medio ecclesiae s. Passio; in australi parte s. Adscensio; in aquilonali s. Resurrectio et in porticu secus ianuas s. Nativitas mirifico opere ex gipso figuratae et auro musivo aliisque pretiosis coloribus pulcherrime compositae sunt. Anscherus, *Vita Angilberti*, ed. Julius von Schlosser, *Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der karolingischen Kunst* (Vienna: 1892), nr. 979.

[87] Susan A. Rabe, *Faith, Art, and Politics at Saint-Riquier: The Symbolic Vision of Angilbert* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 117–118, 189.

[88] Hariulf, "Instituto Sancti Angilberti abbatis de diversitate officiorum," 17, ed. D.K. Hallinger, D.M. Wegner, and D.H. Frank, *Initia consuetudinis Benedictinae: consuetudines saeculi octavi et noni*, *CCM* 1 (Siegburg: F. Schmit, 1963), 302–303.

However, by the time Anscherus composed his text, the stucco and mosaic panels in St-Riquier were two hundred-year-old artifacts from the time of Angilbert himself. As such, the reliefs deserved a full description.[89] Corgnati's thesis that medieval authors would be more likely to describe images in greater detail if the images were perceived to be "antiques" would explain why so many of the descriptions we have of medieval stucco occur in histories written years, if not centuries, after the images they describe were made. It also opens up the interesting possibility that stucco relief could be valued not just for its colors and gilding, but also for the extreme age of some reliefs.

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I have offered two ways of looking at medieval stucco: as a material that was worthless and the antithesis of gold or as a material that was precious and the complement of gold. However, the goal of this dissertation is not to establish hard and fast rules for how stucco was used in the early Middle Ages or to suggest that stucco always had the same meaning when it was used. Instead, I interpret each monument on a case-by-case basis.

Chapter Summaries

This dissertation is organized as four, discrete studies of decorative programs from Late Antique Italy, Lombard Italy, Carolingian Germany, and Romanesque Switzerland. The studies are united by overarching theoretical concerns with materiality and medium. However, the project inevitably reveals more differences than commonalities in the ways stucco was used, since each monument was devised to meet the needs of a unique historical moment.

[89] Corgnati, *L'arte dello stucco,* 14.

Chapter One

The first chapter argues that the materials used in the fifth-century Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna reinforce the rhetoric of the images' pictorial content. It focuses on the dialogue between the stucco reliefs depicting prophets in the window register and the gold mosaics depicting apostles in the dome. A material system of modes exists at the site. Drawing on the sermons of Peter Chrysologus, a fifth-century bishop in Ravenna, as well as on the baptismal theories of Ambrose of Milan, it argues that the prophets are modeled as men made from earth, like Adam, to anchor the figures in the Old Testament tradition to which they belong. In contrast, mosaic was luminous, gem-like, and more appropriate for the new order represented by the New Testament apostles. The typology between the window register and the dome is, therefore, articulated both iconographically and materially, and the progression from the prophets to the apostles paralleled the spiritual transformation that baptism was believed to enact in those who underwent it.

Chapter Two

The second chapter explores the semantics of technologies of production in the *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale del Friuli, an eighth-century oratory. In Cividale, openwork grapevines in stucco frame a central lunette where a fresco depicts a half-length figure of Christ. Standing military saints in fresco flank the lunette, and in the upper register female saints modeled in stucco are arranged symmetrically around a window. The program relies on a visual and tactile contrast between two-dimensional painting and three-dimensional sculpture.

Yet, the main difference between the media is not strictly the material used, since both rely on a similar base substance, a mixture of water, sand, and gypsum. The difference lies with how a human agent has manipulated that shared substance to bring the images into being. What is at stake in the program is not so much the semantics of materials, but the semantics of techniques. With stucco, images are created by accretion (matter built up in front of the wall), while with fresco, images are created by absorption (pigment sinking into wet plaster). Stucco can be thought of as a fundamentally composite medium, while fresco is more uniform in its make-up. The juxtaposition of heterogeneous and homogeneous forms in the Tempietto Longobardo allowed the chapel's makers to visualize a larger mystery, that of Christ's dual nature, and to engage with issues of theology and orthodoxy that were topics of considerable debate in the second half of the eighth century when the chapel was constructed.

Chapter Three

Stucco's capacity to imitate other materials, particularly stone, is the subject of Chapter Three. The late ninth-century *Westwerk* at the Carolingian abbey in Corvey originally featured six figures in stucco relief, four in military dress and two female figures in veils. Though the figures are no longer *in situ*, the underdrawings for the reliefs indicate that they occupied the spandrels of the atrium. The effect of seeing life-size human figures standing on the capitals of piers recalls classical statues on plinths. Moreover, several heavily deteriorated frescoes depicting scenes from classical mythology, including a depiction of Odysseus and Scylla, decorated the narthex, and a gilded architectural inscription written in *capitalis quadrata* adorned the façade. The references to the visual languages of classical Roman antiquity at the site are, therefore,

pronounced. Tellingly, the abbey was built northeast of the Rhine in a region populated by people "whose very names the Romans did not know," as one poem composed at the site in the late ninth-century puts it. The *Westwerk* uses visual conventions from the distant Roman past to fabricate an antique past in a region that not only lay beyond the traditional borders of the old Roman Empire but was also a relatively recent addition to the Carolingian Empire.

Chapter Four

Finally, Chapter Four asks questions of why stucco was used instead of fresco in the late eleventh-century St. Ulrich Chapel in Müstair, where the vault of the Chapel contains half-figures of angels in relief. This compositional scheme is common in Romanesque vaults, though the St. Ulrich Chapel is the only extant example where the composition is executed in polychromed relief not fresco painting. The decision to use relief in the Chapel can be explained by the patron's desire to develop an idiosyncratic "brand" of patronage, since it seems likely that the possible patron, Bishop Norpert, was also responsible for a historiated chancel barrier and a large statue of Charlemagne in stucco relief, which stood in the main church at Müstair. By choosing to employ a sculptural medium for three major artistic commissions, Norpert was able to distinguish his donations from earlier work executed in fresco at the site. The distinction enabled the patron to more effectively claim credit for his work.

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While James Elkins has asserted that "it is relatively easy to build theories about materiality, but relatively difficult to talk about materiality in front of individual objects," my work demonstrates not only the possibility but also the necessity of anchoring

theoretical discussions of materials in individual objects and monuments.[90] Materiality implies a historically grounded investigation into the socially constructed associations carried by a substance in a specific time and place. An individuated approach is crucial, since the meanings of materials change depending on where, how, and when they are used. Scholars of medieval art cannot speak fruitfully about the ways people interacted with, derived meaning from, and invested themselves in materials without recourse to concrete case studies. My work on stucco sculpture in the early Middle Ages argues for a larger methodological imperative to treat the materials of medieval art historically.

[90] James Elkins, "On Some Limits of Materiality in Art History," *Das Magazin des Instituts für Theorie* 12 (2008): 26.

The Orthodox Baptistery: A Material System of Modes

The Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna

A luxurious decorative program deploying various artistic media overlays every surface of the inside of the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna [see Fig. 1]. In the dome, glass mosaics depict the Baptism of Christ, the twelve apostles in procession, and units of fictive architecture [Fig. 9]. In the middle register, eight windows alternate with pairs of stucco reliefs, which represent sixteen robed male figures, who are usually identified as the four major and twelve minor prophets [Fig. 10].[1] The figures hold scrolls and codices and stand beneath *aediculae*; the roofs of the *aediculae* support small Old Testament and christological scenes as well as animal motifs. On the ground floor, an arcade set on marble columns supports a dark blue and gold mosaic. The north, east, south, and west arches feature flat panels of *opus sectile* revetment, while the four arches facing the intercardinal directions open onto deeper apsidioles.[2] The building displays a stratigraphy of materials: mosaic, stucco, and marble.[3] The arrangement invites a discursive reading of the space in which the various material zones are interpreted in dialogue with each another.

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[1] Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann, *Ravenna-Kommentar*, vol. 2, pt. 1 of *Ravenna: Hauptstadt der spätantiken Abendlandes* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974), 30; Carola Jäggi, *Ravenna: Kunst und Kultur einer spätantiken Residenzstadt; die Bauten und Mosaiken des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2013), 123.

[2] The current *opus sectile* panels date to a restoration campaign that took place in the 1890s, but it is likely that "the basic pattern of the [original] *opus sectile* was similar to its present arrangement." Spiro Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), 57–58.

[3] Similar stratified systems of decoration existed in the classical Roman period with heavy materials on the ground floor and lighter, more luminous materials in the upper registers. In the theater of Aemilius Scaurus in Rome: "the lowest story of the stage was of marble, and the middle one of glass (an extravagance unparalleled even in later times), while the top story was made of gilded planks" (*ima pars scaenae e marmore fuit, media e vitro, inaudito etiam postea genere luxuriae, summa e tabulis inauratis*). Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, 36.113–115, ed. and trans. D. E. Eichholz. *Pliny's Natural History: Volume X, Books 36-37*, Loeb Classical Library 419 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 88–89.

This chapter focuses on the middle register of the Baptistery: the stucco reliefs and glass windows. Inserted between the mosaics in the dome and the marble revetment on the ground floor, the stucco register is often described in the art historical literature as a bridge in the vertical axis of the decorative program, marking an intermediate step between the celestial space of the vault and the terrestrial space of the floor.[4] However, concluding that the zones in the Baptistery articulate a figurative hierarchy between heaven and earth only interprets the program in broad strokes.[5] It does not adequately account for the specific symbolism of the materials, the unique rhetoric of the images' pictorial content, or how either the materials or the iconographies concretely relate back to baptism as it was performed inside the building in the fifth century when the program was devised.

Therefore, this chapter provides a more precise reading of the stucco register. It investigates the meaning of both the materials and the imagery employed, relates the reliefs to the other zones of the building, and places the entire decorative program more securely in its distinct historical and ritual context. It argues that the progression from the stucco prophets to the mosaic apostles paralleled the spiritual transformation that baptism was believed to enact in those who underwent it, since before the Sacrament, initiates into the Christian community were routinely described as muddy, corrupt, and spiritually

[4] Gisella Cantino Wataghin, " Lo stucco nei sistemi decorative della tarda antichità," in Sapin, *Stucs et décors*, 123; Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco*, 10; Maria Teresa Pinza, "Decorazioni in stucco degli edifici di culto paleocristiani di Ravenna," *Felix Ravenna* 99/100 (1969): 40–41.

[5] The interpretation echoes the familiar system of zones in Byzantine architecture as summarized by Otto Demus: "The Byzantine church is, first, an image of the Kosmos, symbolizing heaven, paradise (or the Holy Land) and the terrestrial world in an ordered hierarchy, descending from the sphere of the cupolas, which represent heaven, to the earthly zone of the lower parts." However, Demus was concerned, first and foremost, with Middle Byzantine church programs. Applied to a fifth-century baptistery in Italy, his model is only valid in a general sense. Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953), 15.

blind beings who, after the Sacrament, were golden, perfect, and sighted. The prophets are modeled in stucco to liken them to Adam modeled from mud in Genesis as creatures of the first creation. The apostles, golden and luminous, mark the post-Incarnation phase in Christian sacred history and the re-creation promised through baptism. In this way, the material and iconographic progressions complement the ritual performed inside the building.[6]

This reading of the program makes it possible to speak of a material system of "modes" in the Baptistery.[7] Ernst Kitzinger defined the use of modes in Late Antique art as "the conventional use of different stylistic manners to denote different kinds of subject matter or different levels of existence."[8] However, in contrast to Kitzinger's canonical definition, which emphasizes a connection between style and pictorial content, "mode" as it is used in this chapter will stress a connection between material and pictorial content.

Although much of the Orthodox Baptistery's architecture dates to the time of Bishop Ursus (ca. 399–426), the masonry dome and interior decoration were added in the

[6] Sible de Blaauw and Olof Brandt have both related the architecture of baptisteries to the performance of baptism, demonstrating a close connection between the planning of Late Antique buildings and the intended rituals acted out inside them. Sible de Blaauw, "Kultgebäude," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 22 (2008): 340; Olof Brandt, "Understanding the Structures of Early Christian Baptisteries," in *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm et al. (New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 1594ff.

[7] Meyer Schapiro introduced the concept of "modes" in a 1944 book review of Charles Morey's *Early Christian Art*. Critiquing Morey's discussion of "neo-Attic" and "Alexandrian" styles as discrete traditions originating from hegemonic centers of production, Schapiro argued that it was impossible to separate the two traditions, as both styles appeared concurrently in single works of art. Schapiro concluded that Late Antique artisans and workshops were competent enough to work in multiple styles at once and that style was a conscious decision, not an inescapable consequence of where or how a person was trained. Accordingly, style could be invoked an intentional bearer of meaning. Schapiro's book review is not widely cited, but Ernst Kitzinger's more extensive discussion of Late Antique modes, as summarized in *Byzantine Art in the Making*, has been highly influential. Meyer Schapiro, review of *Early Christian Art*, by Charles Morey, *The Review of Religion* 8 (1944): 181–183; Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977). For modes in Roman art see: Tonio Hölscher, *The Language of Images in Roman Art*, trans. Anthony Snodgrass and Annemarie Künzl-Snodgrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[8] Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, 19.

third quarter of the fifth century, under the patronage of Bishop Neon (ca. 451–473). To reconstruct the material symbolism of the Baptistery's stucco reliefs, I use two main types of textual evidence from the fourth and fifth centuries: commentaries on baptism and sermons. I draw especially, though not exclusively, on commentaries by Ambrose of Milan (ca. 374–394). As Annabel Jane Wharton recognized nearly thirty years ago, Ambrose's writings on baptism are uniquely applicable to the Sacrament as it was practiced in fifth-century Ravenna, since baptism in Ravenna followed the Milanese rite instead of the Roman one.[9] The sermons of Peter Chrysologus (*sed*. 433–ca. 450), a prolific preacher and bishop of Ravenna before Neon assumed the post, are also directly relevant to understanding the intellectual environment in Ravenna in the years before Neon commissioned the Baptistery's program.[10]

The Stucco Prophets: Polychromy, Lighting, and Style

Today, it is impossible to recapture fully what the stucco reliefs in the Orthodox Baptistery would have looked like in the fifth century, since the original polychromy is lost. The loss is due in large part to a succession of controversial restorations that occurred in the nineteenth century during which the reliefs were stripped of their color and repainted several times. The campaigns especially altered the tympana above the prophets, where the stucco vine scrolls were destroyed and replaced by fresco paintings

[9] The sermons of Peter Chrysologus indicate that, with the exception of baptism, Ravenna followed the Roman liturgy for the rest of the church year, according to Franco Sottocornola's detailed study. Annabel Jane Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning: The Neonian Baptistery in Ravenna," *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 3 (1987): 360ff; Ivan Foletti, "Saint Ambroise et le Baptistère des Orthodoxes de Ravenne: autour du lavement des pieds dans la liturgie baptismale," in *Fons vitae: baptême, baptistères et rites d'initiation (II^e–VI^e siècle); Actes de la journée d'études, Université de Lausanne, 1^er décembre 2006*, ed. Ivan Foletti and Serena Romano (Rome: Viella, 2009), 125; Franco Sottocornola, *L'anno liturgico nei sermoni di Pietro Crisologo* (Cesena: Centro studi e ricerche sulla antica provincia ecclesiastica Ravennate, 1973), 430.

[10] William B. Palardy, "Introduction," in vol. 2 of *St. Peter Chrysologus: Selected Sermons*, Fathers of the Church 109 (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 13ff.

because the scrolls were erroneously thought to be the result of a seventeenth-century campaign and deemed too "Baroque" by critics.[11] However, even before the nineteenth century, the stucco register was treated to numerous coats of paint.[12] For example, the most recent conservation (2006–2007) of the Baptistery uncovered a sixteenth-century phase of painting in the form of a fictive porphyry roundel above one of the windows.[13] The recent conservation also determined that next to nothing of the fifth-century pigment survives.[14]

Only a few general statements about the polychromy are possible. First, it is unlikely that the stucco prophets were painted in their entirety. In the classical Roman period, the backgrounds behind reliefs were often brightly colored, but the projecting sections of reliefs could be left unpainted [Fig. 11].[15] Growing out of this earlier tradition, the prophets probably also stood out as pale figures against brightly colored backgrounds. Even if sections of the figures like the hands and faces were painted, the robes were almost certainly left white, since white was the normal color for saints', apostles', and prophets' robes, while garments in other colors were the exception to the rule.[16]

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[11] Cetty Muscolino, "Gli apparati decorativi," in *Il Battistero Neoniano: Uno sguardo attraverso il restauro*, ed. Cetty Muscolino, Antonella Ranaldi, and Claudia Tedeschi (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2011), 38; Claudia Tedeschi, "La tecnica costruttiva della cupola e i materiali utilizzati," in ibid., 59–62; Kostof, *Orthodox Baptistery*, 27.

[12] For a summary of the renovations see Mariëtte Verhoeven, *The Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna: Transformations and Memory* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 252–256.

[13] Tedeschi, "La tecnica costruttiva," 60.

[14] Ibid., 62.

[15] Harald Mielsch, *Römische Stuckreliefs* (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle, 1975); Allag, Blanc, and Palazzo-Bertholon, "Le décor de stuc en Gaule," 513.

[16] Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco*, 37.

Cesare Sangiorgi took these traditions into consideration when he put forth a hypothetical reconstruction of the stucco's polychromy, using the color scheme of the mosaics as a guide.[17] Sangiorgi thought that the prophets' robes were originally white and gold like the robes of the apostles above, their faces and hands were flesh-colored, the backgrounds behind the prophets were red, the backgrounds of the tympana were blue, and the vegetal scrolls and architectural elements were gold. An early twentieth-century watercolor, perhaps by Alessandro Azzaroni and currently in the archives of the Soprintendenza in Ravenna, offers a slightly different version of the polychromy in which only the backgrounds are painted [Fig. 12].[18] The original color scheme would have softened what, to modern viewers, can seem like a jarring visual disjunction between the blank prophets in the window register and the colorful apostles in the dome. The polychromy would have provided the space with a more coherent appearance overall.

When considering the original appearance of the Baptistery's reliefs, the question of lighting is just as important as that of polychromy. Eight windows, one for each side of the octagonally planned building, punctuate the spaces between pairs of prophets. However, the windows' purpose was not to allow daylight into the building to illuminate the baptismal ritual, since in fifth-century Ravenna baptism was performed at night.[19] For this reason, lamps and candles would have had to have been used.

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[17] Cesare Sangiorgi, *Il Battistero della Basilica Ursiana di Ravenna* (Ravenna: Tipografia Alighieri, 1900), 59; Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco*, 36–37. Mosaics have been used to recreate the hypothetical polychromy of stucco reliefs in other contexts. See Bente Kiilerich, "Color and Context: Reconstructing the Polychromy of the Stucco Saints in the Tempietto Longobardo at Cividale," *Arte medievale n.s.* 7, no. 2 (2008): 11.

[18] ADSRa 953. Lorenzo Russo, "Il disegno e la fotografia al servizio del monumento: piccola incursione negli archivi," in Muscolino, Ranaldi, and Tedeschi, *Il Battistero Neoniano*, 108.

[19] Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 361.

The size of the windows in the Orthodox Baptistery has been a source of some debate among scholars, since the windows seem too large (2.4 x 1.4 m) for a structure whose interior was not supposed to be seen in daylight.[20] However, as Vladimir Ivanovici has persuasively argued in his discussion of the relationship between the lighting, decoration, and ritual in the Baptistery, it is likely that the windows are large because they were intended as egresses for lamplight instead of ingresses for daylight.[21] Hanging lamps were probably suspended from metal rings above the windows, and the light from these lamps would have shone out from the windows at night, making the building highly visible from the outside in the dark.[22] The lamps would have also thrown raking light onto the stucco reliefs flanking the windows. The oblique angle of the lighting would have amplified the shadows cast by the forms and enhanced the viewers' sense of the prophets having a physical presence in the Baptistery. As three-dimensional forms, the prophets' heads tilt out into space, and their toes curl over the edges of the thresholds on which they stand [Fig. 13]. Likewise, the shells in the pediments appear to peel off the wall [Fig. 14]. The angle of the light on these reliefs would have intensified the sense of the figures emerging from the wall and into the interior space of the Baptistery.

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[20] Olof Brandt, *Battisteri oltre la pianta: Gli alzati di nove battisteri paleocristiani in Italia*, Studi di antichità cristiana 64 (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 2012), 455; Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 96.

[21] Vladimir Ivanovici, "'Luce renobatus': Speculations on the Placement and Importance of Lights in Ravenna's Neonian Baptistery," in *Manipulating Light in Premodern Times: Architectural, Artistic, and Philosophical* Aspects, ed. Daniela Mondini and Vladimir Ivanovici (Mendrisio: Mendrisio Academy Press, 2014), 25. On the visibility of illuminated windows in Late Antique buildings at night see Michael Roberts, "Light, Color, and Visual Illusion in the Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 65/66 (2011/12): 114–115.

[22] Ivanovici, "'Luce renobatus', " 25.

The visual effect may be compared to the effect the artificial lighting had on the mosaics in the cupola. Again, Ivanovici has convincingly argued that a single, round chandelier probably once lit the Baptistery's dome.[23] Illuminating the procession of apostles, the light from the chandelier would have created a contrast between the dark blue background and the apostles' white and gold robes. The apostles' bodies would have caught the light and appeared to stand out against the background.[24] The tesserae in the dome would accomplish optically what the stucco reliefs accomplished tactilely, but both the apostles and the prophets would seem to gain presence from how they were illuminated. The parallel effects would have driven viewers to compare and contrast the representations of holy figures in the two zones of the building.

Previous scholarship on the stucco reliefs in the Orthodox Baptistery has explored how the representations of the prophets relate to the representations of the apostles by focusing narrowly on stylistic differences. For example, Carla Casalone identified instances where the apostles seemed to have served as models for the prophets, specifically the representation of Simon the Canaanite as a template for the stucco prophet to the left of the modern-day entrance [Fig. 15–16].[25] Casalone cited the stylistic discrepancies between the two media as evidence that the prophets belonged to a later, more medieval decorative campaign after Neon's, one that looked to the earlier mosaics

[23] Ibid., Tedeschi, "La tecnica costruttiva," 57.

[24] Ivanovici, "'Luce renobatus'," 24.

[25] Arthur Haselhoff also considered the stucco to be a "clumsy mediaeval addition," specifically citing the architectural settings as evidence of the "most astonishing lack of foresight and ability on the part of the artists, an assumption which the faulty carving of the figures tends to confirm." Before Casalone, Eva Tea argued for a model-copy relationship between the mosaic apostles and the stucco prophets. However, Tea thought the relationship indicated that the same craftsmen were responsible for both the mosaics and the stucco relief. Tea's thesis has been widely rejected. Carla Casalone, "Ricerche sul Battistero della Cattedrale di Ravenna," *Rivista dell'Istituto nazionale d'archeologia e storia dell'arte* 8 (1959): 246–252; Arthur Haselhoff, *Pre-Romanesque Sculpture in Italy* (Florence: Pantheon, 1930), 31–32; Eva Tea, "Gli stucchi del Battistero e un passo di Agnello," *Felix Ravenna* 21 (1916): 939–941.

for models but took place during the episcopacy of Bishop Maximian (*sed*. 546–556).[26] However, Spiro Kostof and Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann rejected Casalone's hypothesis, emphasizing the overall unity of the decorative scheme. They convincingly ascribed both the stucco reliefs and mosaics to Neon's renovations in the third quarter of the fifth century.[27]

Nonetheless, Kostof and Deichmann also acknowledged the disparity between the seemingly clumsy style of the stucco and the more refined style of the mosaics. Kostof noted that the prophets had a "quality of sketchiness, of extemporaneity" about them [Fig. 17–18].[28] To Deichmann, the stuccoes seemed abstracted and "entbehren des wirklichen Lebens."[29] He theorized that the stuccoes were produced by a local, provincial workshop, which gave them a "volkstümlichen" quality, different from the "höfischen" style of the mosaics.[30] That one workshop should be responsible for the mosaics and another should be assigned to the stuccoes made sense to him, given the differences in materials and techniques required to produce the two media. Following Deichmann, Mab van Lohuizen-Mulder observed that in the stuccoes "expressionism prevails, heightened by distortions," and she sugguested that the reliefs could be attributed to a special workshop of stucco-working émigrés from Coptic Egypt who had

[26] Casalone, "Ricerche sul Battistero," 246.

[27] Kostof, *Orthodox Baptistery,* 42ff; Deichmann, *Ravenna-Kommentar*, 43–44.

[28] Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistery,* 95.

[29] Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann, *Ravenna: Geschichte und Monumente,* vol.1 of *Ravenna: Hauptstadt der spätantiken Abendlandes* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969), 150.

[30] Deichmann, *Ravenna-Kommentar*, 45.

settled in Ravenna.[31] In a more recent publication, Cetty Muscolino also described the style of the stuccoes as "estremamente sommario e quasi espressionista."[32]

Noting the differences between the prophets and the apostles, Pasquini suggested that the mosaics and the stuccoes follow a system of modes, as Kitzinger defined the concept.[33] However, Pasquini did not explain why she thought it was necessary to differentiate the prophets from the apostles in this way. Van Lohuizen-Mulder also considered the possibility of modes but ultimately rejected the notion. She thought that there could be no "reason that Old Testament illustrations *in casu* the prophets and the little scenes with Daniel and Jonah … tend more towards expressionism and abstraction than New Testament illustrations."[34] She concluded that "the outspoken contrast seen in the style can be explained only, I believe, by an influence from outside," meaning a workshop of foreign artisans.[35]

In contrast, I argue that the divergent styles and materials deliberately reinforce the typology between the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles. The fact that stucco is a modeled material associated it with the creation of man from mud in Genesis 2 and affirmed the prophets' identities as Old Testament figures. For this argument to be persuasive, though, the original viewers of the program would have to have been able to recognize that the prophets were modeled forms. Stucco was at times used to imitate stone, and if the Baptistery's stuccoes were intended to simulate the

[31] Mab van Lohuizen-Mulder, "Stuccoes in Ravenna, Poreč, and Cividale of Coptic Manufacture," *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 65 (1990): 139, 141; cf. Laura Pasquini, "Il battistero della cattedrale cattolica a Ravenna," in *Venezia e Bisanzio: Aspetti della cultura artistica bizantina da Ravenna a Venezia (V–XIV secolo)*, ed. Clementina Rizzardi (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 2005), 340.

[32] Muscolino, "Gli apparati decorativi," 38.

[33] Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco,* 34.

[34] Van Lohuizen-Mulder, "Stuccoes in Ravenna, Poreč, and Cividale," 140.

[35] Ibid.

appearance of carved stone reliefs, then the argument for a connection to Genesis would not be as convincing. However, there are several reasons to believe that the stucco prophets would have been recognized as a modeled forms in the fifth century.

Not only is the style of the stuccoes different from that of the mosaics, it is also different from stone carving in fifth-century Ravenna, as exemplified by contemporary sarcophagi.[36] A comparison between the scene of Daniel in the Lion's Den on top of one of the *aediculae* and the representation of the same subject on an early fifth-century sarcophagus illustrates the point [Fig. 19–20].[37] In the stone version, there is a sharp distinction between figure and ground; Daniel and the lions are formed primarily using three-dimensional contours. In contrast, in the stucco version, the modeling is flatter with little distinction between figure and ground, and the figures are delineated just as much by graphic outlines as by contours. The graphic quality of the stuccoes' modeling is even more apparent in other areas of the reliefs, such as the incised lines that form the crinkles at the ends of the prophets' draperies [Fig. 21]. Here, the folds appear to have been formed by quickly pressing and drawing a thin tool into and through a tractable substance. The plaster bulges slightly to either side of the tool marks, giving the sense that the material has been pushed aside and bunched up as a result of modeling rather than systematically removed through carving. The stucco workers seem to have made little attempt to replicate the appearance of stone carving. The distinctive style of the reliefs underscores the modeled nature of the figures for viewers.

[36] Deichmann, *Geschichte und Monumente*, 150.

[37] Johannes Kollwitz and Helga Herdejürgen, *Die ravennatischen Sarkophage*, Antiken Sarkophagreliefs 8, 2 (Berlin: Mann, 1979), nr. B4.

How visible these details would have been when seen in semi-darkness from a distance is debatable, especially since in the fifth century, the floor of the Baptistery was roughly three meters lower than it is today, meaning that the reliefs would have been even higher above the heads of original viewers.[38] The polychromy may have further concealed irregularities in the style and mitigated the figures' appearance as modeled forms.[39] That said, the original designers and makers of the Baptistery's program would have known the material from which the reliefs were made. Moreover, Agnellus' ninth-century descriptions explicitly identify reliefs in other buildings in Ravenna as sculpted gypsum; his unambiguous labeling of the material indicates that later viewers who had not been involved directly in making a program were capable of differentiating stucco from stone.[40] It is well within the realm of possibility that the original viewers of the Orthodox Baptistery would have known that the prophets were modeled from stucco, not carved from stone.

Genesis, Artistic Creation, and Baptismal Recreation

The first two chapters of Genesis offer two accounts of how the Judeo-Christian God created the first human being.[41] Genesis 1:27 simply states, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he

[38] Kostof, *Orthodox Baptistery*, 25–27.

[39] Muscolino, "Gli apparati decorativi," 38.

[40] Agnellus does not describe the reliefs in the Orthodox Baptistery. He omits all mention of them, simply stating that Neon "decorated the baptisteries of the Ursiana church most beautifully: he set up in mosaic and gold tesserae the images of the apostles and their names in the vault, he girded the side-walls with different types of stones. His name is written in stone letters." (*Fontes Vrsianae ecclesiae pulcherrime decorauit; musiua et auratis tessellis apostolorum imagines et nomina camera circumfinxit, parietes promiscuis lapidibus cinxit*). Agnellus, *L.P.R.*, 28.9–10, ed. Deliyannis, *CCCM* 199, 175; trans. Deliyannis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, 125.

[41] Laura Nasrallah, "The Earthen Human, the Breathing Statue: The Sculptor God, Greco-Roman Statuary, and Clement of Alexandria," in *Beyond Eden: The Biblical Story of Paradise [Genesis 2–3] and Its Reception History*, ed. Konrad Schmid and Christoph Riedweg (Tübigen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 113.

created them." This version of the origin of human beings is short on detail about the mechanics of the creative act; it does not mention any tools or raw materials used. In contrast, verse 7 of the next chapter describes a more concrete artistic process, "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being."

The material specificity of the second account of creation lent itself well to analogies with human acts of artistic production.[42] A number of Late Antique sermons and poems compare God modeling the first man from dust in Genesis to human craftsmen modeling objects from clay, wax, and stucco. For example, in one sermon delivered during Lent in 387, John Chrysostom (ca. 349–407) explored an extended analogy between God forming the first man from mud and human artisans making objects from clay.[43] The text is particularly rich and worth analyzing at length. However, it must be acknowledged that while many of Chrysostom's sermons and exegetical works were translated into Latin before 420 and known by western theologians like Jerome (347–420) and Augustine, the early reception of Chrysostom's work in the Latin-speaking regions of the Mediterranean was ambivalent, in part because he had a reputation as "an Origenist sympathizer and the disciple of a schismatic."[44]

[42] Meier, "Ton, Stein, und Stuck," 37–38. For a discussion of fifth- and sixth-century texts and images from the eastern Mediterranean where human acts of artistic creation are described as imitations of Genesis see Henry Maguire on personifications of *ktisis* (foundation or creation). For an example of the comparison made in early sixth-century Ravenna, see Anatole Frolow on the donor inscription from the oratory of Sant'Andrea, which casts Bishop Peter II (sed. 494–520), as the creator of a chapel that seemed to produce its own light, in the same spirit as God's creation of light in Genesis. Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 48–50; Anatole Frolow, "La mosaïque murale byzantine," *Byzantinoslavica* 12 (1951): 208; Borsook, "Rhetoric or Reality," 4.

[43] John Chrysostom, *Homiliae XXI de Statuis ad populum Antiochenum habitae*, 11.3–6, ed. J. P. Migne, *PG* 49 (Paris: 1859), col. 121–123.

[44] Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics*, ed. Ken Parry, Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2015), 145.

Chrysostom's Lenten sermon was probably not known specifically to Bishop Neon or others in fifth-century Ravenna who may have participated in the design of the Orthodox Baptistery. Nonetheless, the sermon is useful because it combines into a single source several literary tropes that recur in Late Antique commentaries on Genesis in both the Greek-speaking East and Latin West. These ideas are helpful for thinking in general terms about the material symbolism of the Orthodox Baptistery reliefs and how that symbolism ultimately relates to fifth-century theories of baptism.

Chrysostom began his discussion with a rhetorical question: why did God, who is the perfect Creator, make the human body fallible and susceptible to weaknesses like sweat, tears, and physical suffering? Chrysostom's answer to anyone who found fault with the human body was that, contrary to the body's present state of imperfection, in the beginning in Eden the "body was not corruptible and mortal; but like some statue of gold just brought from the furnace, that shines splendidly, so was that frame free from all corruption."[45]

The decision to liken prelapsarian man to a golden statue is at odds with the earthen creation actually described in Genesis 2:7. Chrysostom's simile is even more interesting, given that, as outlined in the Introduction to this dissertation, classical and Late Antique texts often set gold and clay in binary opposition to each other.[46] Gold was

[45] Οὐ γὰρ οὕτω τὸ σῶμα ἐκεῖνο φθαρτὸν καὶ ἐπίκηρον ἦν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τις χρυσοῦς ἀνδριὰς ἀπὸ χωνευτηρίου προελθὼν ἄρτι καὶ λαμπρὸν ἀποστίλβων, οὕτω πάσης φθορᾶς ἐκεῖνο τὸ σῶμα ἀπήλλακτο. Chrysostom, *de Statuis*, ed. Migne, *PG* 49, col. 121; trans. W.R.W. Stephens, *Chrysostom: On the Priesthood, Ascetic Treatises, Select Homilies and Letters, Homilies on the Statues,* vol. 9 of A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 413, amended.

[46] For a classical Roman example, see Propertius' *Elegies*, which sets up a binary between imperial era temples and the earlier, more humble terracotta statues of gods, claiming "these golden temples have grown up from gods of clay, who deemed it no shame that their huts were crudely built" (*fictilibus crevere deis haec aurea temple / nec fuit opprobrio facta sine arte casa*). In this instance, there is also a temporal dimension to the contrast between clay and gold, with the former being the material of Rome's origins and

widely acknowledged as an incorruptible material, while clay was corruptible.[47] For example, in his second-century treatise on the interpretation of dreams, the *Oneirocritica*, Artemidorus of Daldis advised his readers that when the gods appeared in their dreams, they should pay attention to the identity of the divinity, since different gods had different natures and portended different things. When a statue of a god appeared, dreamers should note not only the deity's identity, but also the materials from which the statue was made.

> And gods and their statues have a similar logic. And, of their statues, those made out of a material that is hard and not liable to decay are good. Examples include those made [out] of gold or silver or bronze or ivory or rock or amber or ebony. And those made out of a different material are less good, and in fact often signify [bad things. Examples include] those made of earth [and] pottery and clay and plaster [and] paintings and the like.[48]

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the latter embodying the achievements of imperial Rome. Propertius. *Elegiae,* 4.1.6, ed. and trans. G. P. Goold, *Elegies*, Loeb Classical Library 18 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 308–309; Stephan Zink and Heinrich Piening, "*Haec aurea templa:* The Palatine Temple of Apollo and its Polychromy," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 22 (2009): 115.

[47] The concept could be rooted in Bible passages like 2 Corinthians 4:7: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." The earthenware jars were often taken as symbols of the body, while costly and luminous metals signified the opposite, things of a divine nature. Ambrose of Milan offered a similar interpretation of the Old Testament story in Judges 7, in which the soldiers in Gideon's army contained another luminous material, fire, inside clay pitchers: "the pitchers are our bodies, which, fashioned out of clay, know not how to fear, if they burn with the fervor of spiritual grace, and bear testimony to the passion of the Lord Jesus with a confession of a melodious voice" (*ita nostri acceptum ab apostolis servavere maiores quod hydriae sint corpora nostra figurata de limo, quae timere non norunt, si fervore gratiae spiritalis igniscant et Iesu domini passionem canorae vocis confessione testentur*). Ambrose of Milan, *De spiritu sancto*, 1.14.147, ed. Otto Faller, *CSEL* 79 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964), 77; trans. Roy Deferrari, *Saint Ambrose: Theological and Dogmatic Works* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 88.

[48] κοινὸν δὲ λόγον ἔχουσιν οἱ θεοὶ καὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα αὐτῶν. τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν ἐξ ὕλης πεποιημένα στερεᾶς τε καὶ ἀσήπτου ἀγαθὰ ἂν εἴη, οἷον τὰ <ἐκ> χρυσοῦ πεποιημένα ἢ ἀργύρου ἢ χαλκοῦ ἢ ἐλέφαντος ἢ λίθου ἢ ἠλέκτρου ἢ ἐβένου· τὰ δὲ ἐξ ὕλης ἄλλης πεποιημένα ἀγάλματα ἧττον ἂν εἴη ἀγαθά, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ <κακά, οἷον> τὰ γήινα <καὶ> ὀστράκινα καὶ πήλινα καὶ κήρινα <καὶ> γραπτὰ καὶ τὰ ὅμοια. Artemidorus of Daldis, *Artemidori Daldiani onirocriticon libri v,* 2.39.57–64, ed. Roger Ambrose Pack, *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1963), 176; trans. Daniel E. Harris-McCoy, *Artemidorus'* Oneirocritica: *Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 228–229. See also Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 29–31.

Artemidorus' advice draws on a perceived hierarchy between materials, determined by such physical properties as hardness and durability. Gold portended good things since it was "not liable to decay," while clay and plaster portended bad things, since they were inherently friable.

Chrysostom was aware of the different connotations carried by gold and clay in his period, and as a result, he felt compelled to defend God's decision to make man from corruptible earth in Genesis 2. Elaborating on how a body made from earth could nonetheless be as perfect as a body made from gold, Chrysostom explained that the deciding factor was not the material used, but the artistic skill with which God shaped the dust.

> In proportion, therefore, as you find fault with the meanness of the material, be so much the more astonished at the greatness of the skill displayed. For this reason also, I do not so much admire the sculptor who forms a beautiful figure out of gold as him who, by the resources of his skill, is able, even in crumbling clay to exhibit a marvelous and inimitable specimen of beauty in his plastic workmanship. In the former case, the material gives some aid to the artist, but in the latter, there is a naked display of his skill.[49]

Craftsmen who worked in precious metals had a built-in advantage over those who worked in clay. Craftsmen casting in gold did not have to try as hard to astonish viewers with their creations, because they could rely on their material to be impressive enough on its own. Sculptors modeling in clay had to be virtuosos to compensate for the bland nature of their material. By analogy, the fact that God chose to make man from earth "by no means lowers the admiration due to the Creator's workmanship, but rather increases it;

[49] Ὥστεὅσῳπερ ἂν κατηγορῇς τοῦ τῆς οὐσίας εὐτελοῦς, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον θαύμασον τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῆς τέχνης. Ἐπεὶ καὶ ἀνδριαντοποιὸν οὐχ οὕτω θαυμάζω τὸν ἀπὸ χρυσοῦ καλὸν ἀνδριάντα ποιοῦντα, ὡς τὸν ἀπὸ πηλοῦ τοῦ διαπίπτοντος τῇ τῆς τέχνης εὐπορίᾳ δυνάμενον κάλλος ἐπιδεῖξαι πλάσεως θαυμαστὸν καὶ ἀμήχανον. Ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ καὶ συντελεῖ τι ἡ ὕλη τῷ πλάττοντι, ἐνταῦθα δὲ, γυμνὴ τῆς τέχνης ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπίδειξις. Chrysostom, *de Statuis*, ed. Migne, *PG* 49, col. 122; trans. Stephens, *Homilies on the Statues*, 414, amended.

for the inferiority of the substance calls forth a display of the resourcefulness and adaptive nature of his skill."[50]

For Chrysostom, executing the most complicated design in a base material demonstrated the magnitude of God's creative achievement, which went far beyond the capabilities of human craftsmen. He underscored the point by comparing the fictile human body to objects that mundane craftsmen could produce from the same material.

> If you would learn then, how great the wisdom of the Creator is, consider what it is that is made out of clay. What else is there but brick and tile? Nevertheless, God, the Supreme Artist, from the same material of which only brick and tile are formed, has been able to make an eye so beautiful, as to astonish all who behold it, and to implant in it such power, that it can at once survey the high aerial expanse, and by the aid of a small pupil embrace the mountains, forests, hills, the ocean, even the heavens by so small a thing![51]

According to Chrysostom, then, human ceramicists were only capable of producing simple geometric forms from their material. As accomplishments went, bricks and tiles were underwhelming compared to a wonder like the human eye.

Chrysostom was not the only Late Antique writer to compare God creating man in Genesis 2 to human artisans sculpting clay. The analogy is also present in Latin sources. For example, in a lengthy poem on Genesis, Avitus of Vienne (ca. 470–523) described God as a sculptor and painter who modeled a figure from wet clay, let it harden, and then painted its surface before breathing a soul into it.

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[50] Τὸ γὰρ εὐτελὲς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦτο μάλιστα δείκνυσι τῆς τέχνης τὸ εὔπορον καὶ εὐμήχανον, ὅτι ἐν πηλῷ καὶ τέφρᾳ τοσαύτην ἐνέθηκεν ἁρμονίαν, καὶ τοιαύτας αἰσθήσεις οὕτω ποικίλας καὶ παντοδαπὰς καί τοιαῦτα δυναμένας φιλοσοφεῖν. Ibid.

[51] Εὐ δὲ εἰ βούλει μαθεῖν πόση τοῦ δημιονργήσαντος ἡμᾶς ἐστιν ἡ σοψία, ἐννόησον τί γίνεται ἀπὸ πηλοῦ· τί δὲ ἕτερον ἀλλ΄ ἢ πλίνθος καὶ χέραμος; Ἀλλ΄ ὅμως ἴσγυσεν ὁ ἀριστοτέχνης Θεὸς ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης ἐξ ἧς γίνετῦι κέραμος καὶ πλίνθος μόνον, ὀφθαλμὸν οὕτω ποιῆσαι καλδν, ὡς ἅπαντας ἐκπλὴττειν τοὺς ὀρῶντας, καὶ τοσαὐτην ἐνθεῖναι τοὐτψ δὐναμιν, ὡς ἀέρος τοσοῦτον ὕφος καθορᾷν, καὶ μικρᾶς κόρης ἀντιλήφει τοσαῦτα περιλαμζάνειν σώμκτα, καὶ ἤρη καὶ νάπας, καὶ βουνοὺς, καὶ πελάγη, καὶ οὐρανὸν δι΄ ἐκείνης τῆς μικρᾶς. Ibid.

> These things God spoke and, deigning to touch the brittle earth, He mingled wet mud with sprinkled dust. Then His profound Wisdom fashioned a new body. This is just the way a craftsman (*opifex*) now creates, a craftsman who uses his skill to shape the soft wax that yields all kinds of shapes beneath his touch, as he molds a face with his hand, fashions a body of plaster (*gypso*) or arranges features in a piece of clay. This is the way the Almighty Father went on molding the earth that was destined for life, as He designed the body from soft mud. […] After the image of this perfect new creature lay finished and the molded clay had taken on all the appearances their Maker desired, the mud became flesh. What was soft grew hard, and the bones drew their marrow from within the body. Blood filled the veins, and a flush tinged the face with the color of life. Its original pallor was driven from the entire body, and the snowy face was painted (*depingit*) red.[52]

Likewise, for Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636), the act of modeling figures from malleable substances was etymologically linked to God's creation of man: "Thus, making some shape by pressing into clay is molding (*plastis*). Whence also *protoplastus* is the name for the human being who was first made from mud."[53]

The link between Genesis and human artistic acts revealed in the literary sources raises the question of whether or not practicing craftsmen working in modeled materials in Late Antiquity also thought about a connection between their materials and the Genesis story.[54] A group of prefabricated clay tiles from the Loire valley around Nantes, which depict Adam and Eve picking fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,

[52] Haec ait et fragilem dignatus tangere terram / Temperat umentem consperso in pulvere limum / Orditurque novum dives sapientia corpus. / Non aliter quam nunc opifex, quibus artis in usu est / Flectere laxatas per cuncta sequacia ceras / Et vultus implere manu seu corpora gypso / Fingere vel signi speciem conponere massae. […]Postquam perfectae iacuit novitatis imago / Formatumque lutum speciem pervenit in omnem: / Vertitur in carnem limus durataque molles / Visceribus mediis traxerunt ossa medullas. / Inseritur venis sanguis vivoque colore / Inficit ora rubor: toto tum corpore pallor / Pellitur et niveos depingit purpura vultus. Avitus of Vienne, *Poematum libri vi*, 1.73–120, ed. Rudolf Peiper, *MGH Auct. ant.* 6, 2 (Berlin: 1883), 205–206; trans. George W. Shea, *The Poems of Alcimus Ecdicius Avitus* (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997), 74, amended.

[53] Nam et inpressa argilla formam aliquam facere plastis est. Vnde et protoplastus est dictus homo qui ex limo primus est conditus. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. Lindsay, *Etymologiarvm*, 19.15.1; trans. Stephen Barney et al., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 379.

[54] On the interconnection between the literary and visual arts see Laura Nasrallah, who has argued that it is impossible to understand Clement of Alexandria's ideas about Genesis 2:7 without reference to the material environment of the second-century city in which he lived, particularly Alexandria's public sculptures. Nasrallah, "The Earthen Human," 126–132.

may attest to an interest in linking malleable materials to Genesis not just in verbal sources but also in real objects [Fig. 22].[55] The Nantes tiles date to the late fifth or early sixth century.[56] A single workshop apparently produced the Temptation tiles for three different buildings in the area using the same mold for each.[57] Eight examples have been discovered in Nantes and in nearby Rezé and Vertou, testifying to the theme's popularity in a single region.[58]

Similar clay tiles have also been discovered at sites in North Africa.[59] The North African examples depict such scenes as Jonah, the sacrifice of Isaac, Susannah, and Adam and Eve covering their nakedness after the Fall [Fig. 23].[60] The North African tiles feature a range of Old Testament stories, but in the Nantes group, the Temptation is the sole narrative subject. While accidents of preservation must be considered, the survival rate of Temptation tiles in Nantes suggests that, for the makers of the tiles, the story of

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[55] Dominique Costa, *Nantes. Musée Th. Dobrée: Art Mérovingien*, Inventaire des Collections publiques Françaises 10 (Paris: Éditions des Musées Nationaux, 1964), under "Iconographie"; Gérard Aubin, "Pays-de-la-Loire," in *Sud-Ouest et Centre*, vol. 2 of *Les premiers monuments chrétiens de la France* (Paris: Picard, 1996), 216–217.

[56] Such tiles were produced in multiples from molds and affixed in frieze-like compositions to the walls and, possibly on occasion, the ceilings and floors of buildings. Marie-Christine Maufus, "Observations sur la production et l'utilisation du décor architectural en terre cuite pendant l'Antiquité tardive," in *Fabrication et consommation de l'œuvre*, vol. 3 of *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age; Colloque international, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Université de Rennes II, Haute-Bretagne, 2–6 mai 1983*, ed. Xavier Barral i Altet (Paris: Picard, 1990), 54.

[57] Dominique Simon-Hiernard, "Brique historiée: Adam et Ève," in Sapin, *Le Stuc,* 110.

[58] Costa, *Nantes*, fig. 2–3, 5–6, 22–25.

[59] R. de la Blanchere, "Carreaux de terre cuite à figure découverts en Afrique," *Revue Archéologique* 11 (1888): 302–322; Jean Ferron and Maurice Pinard, "Plaques de terre cuite préfabriquées d'époque byzantine découvertes à Carthage," in *Cahiers de Byrsa* 2 (1952): 97–120. Tiles have also been found at sites in Spain, but recognizable narrative scenes do not occur in the Spanish context. Pedro de Palol, "Placas en cerámica, decoradas, paleocristianas y visigodas," in vol. 1 of *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Mario Salmi*, ed. Valentino Martinelli (Rome: De Luca, 1961), 150; idem. "A propósito de las placas de cerámica, decoradas, hispanovisigodas," in *Stucchi e mosaici altomedioevali*, vol. 1 of *Atti dell'ottavo Congresso di studi sull'alto Medioevo*, Congresso di Studi sull'Arte dell'Alto Medioevo 8 (Milan: Ceschina, 1962), 300–302.

[60] Blanchere connected the North African narrative tiles to funerary contexts. Blanchere, "Carreaux de terre cuite," 317, 322.

the Temptation was more appealing than other potential narrative subjects, possibly because Adam's unique identity as a protoplast suited the molded clay medium. That said, other clay tiles found around Nantes depict non-narrative motifs like crosses and the Chi-Rho, vegetal scrolls, scenes of hounds chasing hares, marine creatures, winged victories carrying crowns, and isolated male figures raising their hands in blessing. Clay may have been considered well suited to depictions of the Temptation in Late Antique Nantes, but that particular valence of meaning did not prohibit the material's use for generic, non-narrative designs.

The genesiacal associations carried by modeled substances may have at times guided Late Antique craftsmen to select pictorial subjects suited to those materials.[61] Vice versa, the associations carried by a particular iconography could have led to the use of a modeled material. In the Orthodox Baptistery, the decision to render the prophets in stucco relief instead of glass mosaic was inspired by the material's potential to call to mind the Creation and Fall of Man. The prophets were purposefully made to look like protoplasts to anchor them in the Old Testament tradition to which they belonged. The representations of animals — birds, quadrupeds, and sea creatures — flanking vases overflowing with vegetation, as well as the lost vegetal scrolls in the tympana above the prophets may have also tapped into a connection to Genesis by representing Creation in its diversity.[62]

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[61] That materials and pictorial content could mutually inflect each other is apparent in Late Antique glyptic, where certain stones could be chosen to suit certain subjects, such as lapis lazuli for depictions of Aphrodite. See Christopher Faraone, "Text, Image, and Medium: the Evolution of Graeco-Roman Magical Gemstones," in *"Gems of Heaven": Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in Late Antiquity, AD 200–600*, ed. by Chris Entwistle and Noël Adams (London: British Museum, 2011), 50–61.

[62] Interpreting the *aediculae* scenes as symbolizing Paradise differs from Jean Richer's interpretation, which understands the scenes as zodiac signs. This is not a convincing reading, mainly because there are sixteen scenes, but only twelve zodiac signs. Jean Richer, *Iconologie et tradition: symboles cosmiques dans l'art chrétien* (Paris: Guy Trédaniel, 1984), 57–65. Many fifth- and sixth-century floor mosaics in the

The image of the prophets as creatures of the first creation had particular significance in a baptistery, since the Sacrament was understood to be a transformative experience in which the old Adam was remade into the new and the building where it took place was conceived of as a metaphorical Eden.[63] The first creation of man from mud in Genesis was a precursor to the process of sacramental recreation. This idea is especially clear in two sermons by Peter Chrysologus on the story of the healing of the man born blind in John 9, a popular allegory for baptism in which Christ mixes his saliva with dust, smears the resultant mud on the blind man's eyes, then sends the man off to wash the mud away in the pool of Siloam. Verses 1 through 7 of John 9 read:

> As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

In one sermon on this miracle, Chrysologus asked why it was necessary for Christ to use mud to cure the blind man, when he had previously cured others from blindness using only his words. Chrysologus concluded that because the man had been born blind, his was not a case where someone had lost his vision and now needed it repaired. The man's eyesight had always been incomplete. Christ did not simply fix the man's eyes; he

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eastern Mediterranean use the motif of animals arranged symmetrically around central elements, like trees, in order to symbolize the earthly Paradise from Genesis and allude to the eschatological Paradise described in Isaiah 11 simultaneously. See Rotraut Wisskirchen, "Zum 'Tierfrieden' in spätantiken Denkmälern (nach Gen. 1,29f, Jes. II,6/8 und 65,25)," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 52 (2009): 163.

[63] Robin Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual, and Theological Dimensions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 177ff.

created vision for him wholesale. By using mud, Christ's creation of the blind man's eyesight recalled the creation of the entire man in Genesis. Chrysologus explained:

> On this man Christ places mud, by fashioning and making it into a kind of eye-salve, he procured, and not merely cured his eyesight. As a result, he used his hand to create and not merely to heal, and provided the human being with vision from the same material out of which he had formed the whole human being.[64]

He repeated this interpretation in a second sermon:

> And so he [Christ] refashions the eyes from the source from which he had made the whole human being: he moistens (*baptizat*) the mud with his spittle, in order that, just as in the beginning, unstained dust would be molded by divine hands, and his action in making him see would show clearly that he was the Maker of the human being.[65]

Chrysologus' choice of the word *baptizat* in this passage connects the healing of the man born blind to the recreation of the individual that would occur during baptism. The material continuity between the three moments of creation – the dust in Genesis, the mud in the gospel miracle, and the bodies of the baptized – emphasized the idea that baptism entailed a recreation, one that was necessitated by the Fall. That the blind man's sight was recreated from the same raw material used in Genesis was a crucial point for other fifth-century writers. For example, Sedulius (ca. 425–450) asserted that the man blind from birth

> had fallen from the deficient womb of his mother into a daylight without light. Thereupon, the Creator of human blood and the source of the world-coming-into-being, not suffering to let the imperfect organs be any longer deprived of their

[64] christus inponit lutum, et collyrio materiali fingit, facit, procurat oculos, non recurat, ut creante, non medicante manu, inde hominis suppleret lumina, unde hominem fecerat totum. Peter Chrysologus, *Collectio sermonum*, 176.1.10–12, ed. Alexandre Olivar, *CCSL* 24B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 1068; trans. William B. Palardy, vol. 3 of *St. Peter Chrysologus: Selected Sermons,* Fathers of the Church 110 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 339.

[65] hinc ergo reformat oculos unde fecerat hominem totum: sputo suo baptizat limum, ut immaculatus puluis sicut in principio diuinis manibus tractaretur, et ipsum esse factorem hominis factura luminum perdoceret. Ibid., 178.4.69–72, ed. ibid., 1082; trans. ibid., 352.

> proper use, smeared the man's natal mud (*natale lutum*) upon the closed holes in his cheeks, and repaired him from the ancient seed.[66]

Baptism, therefore, echoed the Creation in Genesis and inverted the damage done in the Fall.

Chrysologus' exegeses on John 9 encapsulate a larger habit of thinking about the relationship between biblical miracles and sacramental mysteries, which was emerging in the fifth century, when it was believed that God's creative interventions in the world had not stopped after the sixth day but had begun anew with the miracle of the Incarnation.[67] All subsequent miracles described in the gospels after the Incarnation proved that God's reformation and correction of nature remained an ongoing project. Moreover, biblical miracles served as models for the sacraments, which were taken as evidence that God's work of refashioning the first creation was a perpetually recurring process that continued even into the present day.[68] The connection between miracles and sacraments is visualized in the baptistery of San Giovanni in Fonte in Naples (ca. 400), where the mosaic panels beneath the dome represent several miracles, including the transformation of water into wine at Cana, Christ walking on water, and the miraculous catch of fish [Fig. 24]. The water-themed mosaics link the miraculous overturn of the natural order in

[66] Qui male praegnantis dilapsus uentre parentis / In lucem sine luce ruit. tunc sanguinis ille / Conditor humani mundi que orientis origo, / Inperfecta diu proprii non passus haberi / Membra operis, natale lutum per claustra genarum / Inliniens hominem ueteri de semine supplet. Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, 4.256–257, ed. J. Huemer, *CSEL* 10 (Berlin: 1885), 108; trans. Giselle de Nie, *Poetics of Wonder: Testimonies of the New Christian Miracles in the Late Antique Latin World* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 399–400. For an alternative translation see Carl Springer, *Sedulius, The Paschal Song and Hymns* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 123.

[67] Nie, *Poetics of Wonder*, 260–266, 406–409.

[68] Ibid., 367.

the biblical past to the water-based, baptismal reformation of human beings in the present.[69]

Given that baptism was understood to be an act of re-creation directly related to Genesis, it is significant that the transformation from clay to gold that John Chrysostom used in his Lenten sermon to describe the creation of man also occurs in another of his sermons, a commentary on Colossians, where he discusses baptism. Like the Lenten sermon, Chrysostom's exegesis on Colossians employs the image of a gold statue as a metaphor for the perfected human body. However, this time, instead of using the motif to describe prelapsarian man, he applies it to a baptizand.

> Don't be surprised if birth and destruction occur in baptism, because — tell me — isn't to melt the opposite of to make adhere? It's clear to everyone that it is. This is what fire does, in that it melts and destroys wax, but makes metallic earth adhere and produces gold. So it is too in the case of baptism: the power of the fire destroys the wax statues, and produces gold in its stead. For we're indeed muddy before the bath, but golden after it. How is this evident? Listen to Paul saying: "The first human being was from earth, dusty; the second human being is from heaven, heavenly" (1 Cor.15:47). While I've spoken of how far mud is from gold, I've found a greater difference between the heavenly and the earthly: it's not so much how far mud is from gold, as much as earthly things are from heavenly things. We were made of wax and muddy; indeed the flame of passion melted us much more than fire does wax, and whatever temptation arrived broke us much more than stone does mud. And, if you like, let's describe our former life [to see] if everything wasn't earth and water, and easily blown about, and dust both unstable and readily dispersed.[70]

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[69] Geir Hellemo, "Baptism: The Divine Touch," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 18 (2004): 108–111. The Santa Sabina doors provide another instance where images of biblical miracles are related to catechesis and baptism. See Ivan Foletti, "Le Porte lignee di Santa Sabina all'Aventino: tra liturgia stazionaria e funzione iniziatica (il nartece di Santa Sabina, II)," *Hortus atrium medievalium* 20 (2014): 710–715.

[70] Μὴ θαυμάσῃς, εἰ γένεσις καὶ φθορὰ γίνεται ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι· ἐπεὶ, εἰπέ μοι, τὸ λύειν τῷ συγκολλᾷν οὐκ ἐναντίον; Παντί που δῆλον. Τοῦτο τὸ πῦρ ποιεῖ· κηρὸν μὲν γὰρ διαλύει καὶ ἀπόλλυσι, γῆν δὲ μεταλλικὴν συγκολλᾷ καὶ χρυσὸν ἐργάζεται. Οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐνταῦθα, τὸν κήρινον ἀνδριάντα ἀφανίσασα ἡ τοῦ πυρὸς δύναμις, ἔδειξε χρυσοῦν ἀντ' ἐκείνου· πήλινοι γὰρ ὄντως ἦμεν πρὸ τοῦ λουτροῦ, χρυσοῖ δὲ μετὰ τοῦτο. Πόθεν δῆλον; Ἄκουσον αὐτοῦ λέγοντος· Ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκὸς, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος οὐράνιος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Ἐγὼ μὲν ὅσον πηλίνου πρὸς χρυσὸν τὸ μέσον εἶπον, εὗρον δὲ μείζονα διαφορὰν οὐρανίου καὶ γηΐνου· οὐ τοσοῦτον δὲ πηλίνου καὶ χρυσοῦ τὸ μέσον, ὅσον τῶν γηίνων καὶ τῶν οὐρανίων. Κήρινοι ἦμεν, καὶ πήλινοι· καὶ γὰρ ἡ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἡμᾶς ἔτηξε φλὸξ πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν κηρὸν τὸ πῦρ· καὶ ὁ τυχὼν ἡμᾶς συνέκλα πειρασμὸς πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ τοὺς πηλίνους ὁ λίθος. Καὶ, εἰ βούλεσθε, ὑπογράψωμεν τὸν πρότερον βίον, εἰ μὴ πάντα ἦν γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ εὐρίπιστον ἔχοντα καὶ τὸν κονιορτὸν

The contrast between earthly mud/wax and heavenly gold denotes the reclamation of heavenly perfection through baptism.[71] Moreover, Chrysostom's claim that "we're indeed muddy before the bath, but golden after it" resonates with the material progression from the stucco prophets to the gold apostles in the Orthodox Baptistery.

From Blindness to Sight

In addition to visualizing the baptizands' transformation from earthly to heavenly beings, the difference between stucco and mosaic in the Baptistery articulates a specific distinction between how the prophets and the apostles were viewed by Christians in Late Antiquity, namely the ways that the two groups were believed to see the divine. The prophets only saw Christ abstractly through visions, but the apostles literally saw Christ present in the body. In part, it was the prophets' muddy carnality that impeded their spiritual sight.

The distinction between the prophets' and apostles' ways of seeing has roots in biblical passages like Matthew 13:17, "many prophets and just men desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it." Augustine interpreted this passage in terms of different temporalities of vision: "although the prophets did see these things in spirit, they saw them somehow represented as future,

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καὶ τὸ ἄστατον καὶ διαῤῥέον. John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 7.3, ed. Frederick Field, *Tou en hagiois patros hēmōn Iōannou archiepiskopou Kōnstantinoupoleōs tou chrysostomou hypomnēmata eis tas pros Philippēsious kai Kolossaeis kai Thessalonikeis epistolas* (Oxford: 1855), col 246C–D; trans. Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (London: Routledge, 2000), 77–78; On the symbolism of the earthly and heavenly man other texts on baptism see: Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 178–182.

[71] The image of a gold statue was also a popular way for Late Antique writers to imagine the perfection of an incorrupt corpse or a resurrected body. Caroline Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 50, 70–71.

whereas to the apostles they were revealed as already present."[72] The notion of the prophets having limited, anticipatory vision is of central importance in the context of a baptistery, since, as such, the prophets provided an apt model for the catechumens before baptism, whose knowledge also remained limited and abstract.

In the fifth century, aspiring initiates who wanted to be baptized would announce their intentions and submit their names to be considered for the Sacrament at the beginning of Lent.[73] After enrollment, they participated in weeks of instruction or catechesis to prepare for Holy Saturday. During that time, the catechumens' status was intermediate; they had begun to learn about the Christian mysteries but had not yet experienced the rite of passage that marked their official entrance into the Christian community in Ravenna.[74] The practice of restricting access to baptistery buildings in Late Antiquity promoted the notion that baptism imparted privileged knowledge to initiates that was previously unavailable to them. In theory, no one was supposed to see the inside of a baptistery until the actual night of his or her baptism.[75] Ambrose

[72] multi iusti et prophetae uoluerunt uidere quae uidetis, et non uiderunt; et audire quae auditis, et non audierunt quamuis enim uiderent ista in spiritu, tamen futura illis quodam modo formabantur: apostolis autem iam praesentia reddebantur." Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 96.1.13, ed. Eligius Dekkers and Johannes Fraipont *CCSL* 39 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1956), 1354; trans. Maria Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms, 73-98*, vol. III/18 of *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), 438.

[73] Thomas Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 4.

[74] Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation: Phenomenological, Taxonomical, and Culturally Evolutionary Reflections," in Hellholm et al., *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism*, 20–24.

[75] The idea that access was always perfectly controlled is an ideal. In practice there may have been other times and occasions when people might enter a baptistery. For instance, before his execution in 526 Boethius was imprisoned in the baptistery of Pavia. The case is exceptional, but it demonstrates that baptisteries could potentially serve *ad hoc* functions and be opened on other occasions. "Then Albinus and Boethius were imprisoned in the baptistery of a church. And the king summoned Eusebius, prefect of the city, to Ticinum, and pronounced sentence on Boethius without giving him a hearing" (*Tunc Albinus et Boetius ducti in custodiam ad baptisterium ecclesiae. Rex vero vocavit Eusebium, praefectum urbis, Ticinum et inaudito Boethio protulit in eum sententiam*). Anonymus Valesianus, 2.14.82, ed. and trans. J.

compared the sacred character of baptisteries to that of the Jewish Holy of Holies, which was also only opened once a year.

> In the Old Testament, the priests were accustomed to enter the first tabernacle frequently; the highest priest entered the second tabernacle once a year… That you may understand what the second tabernacle is, in which the priest introduced you, in which once a year the highest priest is accustomed to enter, that is, the baptistery where the rod of Aaron flourished.[76]

Before baptism, the catechumens could anticipate what it would be like to enter the Holy of Holies – they had, after all, undergone instruction during Lent – but the knowledge remained theoretical rather than experiential. There were, then, two stages of knowledge for catechumens: the partial knowledge of catechesis and the full knowledge of baptism.

Ambrose of Milan described the two stages that the catechumens would undergo by citing the story of the healing of the man born blind in John 9, which was invoked in the practice of smearing mud on the catechumens' eyes at the time of their enrollment at the beginning of Lent. For Ambrose, the most important aspect of the miracle was that it was accomplished in two stages: the initial placing of the mud on the man's eyes and the later washing off of the mud in the pool of Siloam. He began by quoting John 9:7.

> "He [Christ] took clay and spread it upon his eyes and said to him: Go to Siloam. And rising he went and washed and he came home seeing." Do you also consider the eyes of your heart. You saw the things that are corporeal with corporeal eyes, but the things that are of the sacraments you were not yet able to see with the eyes of the heart. So, when you gave your name, he took mud and besmeared it over your eyes. What does this signify? That you confessed your sin, that you

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C. Rolfe, *Excerpta Valesiana,* Loeb Classical Library 331 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 562–563.

[76] In veteri testamento sacerdotes frequenter in primum tabernaculum introire consueverant, in secundum tabernaculum semel in anno summus intrabat sacerdos… Ut intellegatis, quod sit secundum tabernaculum, in quo vos introduxit sacerdos, in quo semel in anno summus sacerdos intrare consuevit, hoc est ad baptisterium, ubi virga Aaron floruit. Ambrose of Milan, *De sacramentis*, 4.1.1–2, ed. Otto Faller, *CSEL* 73 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1955), 46; trans. Deferrari, *Saint Ambrose*, 297; Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 361; Reidar Aasgaard, "Ambrose and Augustine: Two Bishops on Baptism and Christian Identity," in Hellholm et al., *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism*, 1253.

> examined your conscience, that you performed penance for your sins, that is, that you recognize the lot of human generation.[77]

Ambrose associated the first phase of healing with Old Testament Law. The mud signified "the lot of human generation," which catechumens had to recognize when they confessed their sins and submitted their names to become candidates for baptism. The second phase, the washing off of the mud in Siloam, symbolized New Testament grace and the later moment on Holy Saturday when the catechumens were actually baptized with water in the font. Ambrose interpreted the command to "Go to Siloam," as meaning: "Go to that font, at which the cross of Christ the Lord is preached; go to that font, at which Christ redeemed the errors of all."[78]

During the weeks of instruction leading up to baptism, catechumens looked forward to a future vision of God, like the Old Testament prophets. During the baptismal ritual itself, they were supposed to experience a vision of God as if in the present, like the New Testament apostles. Persons standing in the font during baptism could look up to see the Baptism of Christ in the oculus directly above their heads, circumscribed by the glowing, central chandelier in the dome.[79] In that moment, baptizands were not only supposed to witness a scene from biblical history as if present, but also experience a theophanic vision of the Trinitarian God, since all three members of the Trinity were believed to have been present at Christ's baptism. This mystery was something that

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[77] Tulit lutum et linuit super oculos eius et dixit illi: Vade in Siloam. Et surgens ivit et lavit et venit videns. Considera et tu oculos cordis tui. Videbas quae corporalia sunt, corporalibus oculis, sed quae sacramentorum sunt, cordis oculis adhuc videre non poteras. Ergo quando dedisti nomen tuum, tulit lutum et linuit super oculos tuos. Quid significat? Ut peccatum tuum fatereris, ut conscientiam recognosceres, ut paenitentiam gereres delictorum, hoc est sortem humanae generationis agnosceres. Ambrose, *De sacr.*, 3.2.11–12, ed. Faller, *CSEL* 73, 43; trans. Deferrari, *Saint Ambrose,* 294.

[78] et dixit tibi: Vade in Siloam. Quid est Siloam? Quod interpretatur, inquit, missus. Hoc est: Vade ad illum fontem, in quo crux Christi domini praedicatur, vade ad illum fontem, in quo omnium Christus redimit errores. Ibid., 3.2.14, ed. ibid., 45; trans. ibid., 295.

[79] Ivanovici, "'Luce renobatus'," 24–25.

could only be sensed and understood through their newly opened "eyes of the heart," as Ambrose put it.[80]

Ambrose was not alone in suggesting that the mud used in the miracle in John 9 symbolized the Old Testament Law and the catechumens' intermediate state between their initial confession at the beginning of Lent and their ultimate baptism on the night of Holy Saturday. In one of several exegeses on John 9, Augustine interpreted the mud Christ used to enact the blind man's cure as symbolic of the Old Testament prophets' carnality as an impediment to their spiritual sight.

> So the Lord too, in curing this man born blind, who represented the human race born blind, in giving sight to this man, he observed a due order. The Lord spat on the earth and made mud, and anointed his eyes with saliva. The earth stands for the prophets. This earth, you see, was sent in advance, because what, after all, are the prophets but earth? Men, that is to say, made from earth, received the spirit of the Lord, and anointed the people of God. They had prophecy at their disposal but they could not yet see.[81]

Mud recalled the first creation of man in Genesis and the sin that subsequently corrupted humankind in the Fall. The Old Testament prophets were creatures of this first creation, and although they had received the spirit of God and could prophesy, their corporeality got in the way of their ability to see God directly. The decision to render the Orthodox Baptistery prophets in stucco relief instead of glass mosaic reifies Augustine's claim that the prophets were "*homines facti de terra*." The progression from the prophets in the

[80] Josef Engemann, "Die Huldigung der Apostel im Mosaik des ravennatischen Orthodoxenbaptisteriums," in *Beiträge zur Ikonographie und Hermeneutik: Festschrift für Nikolaus Himmelmann*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Cain, Hans Gabelmann, and Dieter Salzmann (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1989), 484; Rotraut Wisskirchen, "Zum Medaillon im Kuppelmosaik des Orthodoxenbaptisteriums," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 36 (1993): 165.

[81] seruauit ergo et dominus in isto curando caeco nato, in quo figurabatur genus humanum caecum natum, in hoc ergo homine illuminando seruauit ordinem. spuit in terra et lutum fecit, et inunxit oculos eius saliua dominus. terra prophetas significat, haec enim praemissa est terra quia prophetae quid nisi terra? homines uidelicet facti de terra acceperunt spiritum domini et inunxerunt populum dei. Augustine, *Sermones*, 136C, ed. M.F. Berrouard, *REAug* 24 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1977), 90; trans. Edmund Hill, *Sermons (94A-147A) on the Old Testament,* vol. III/4 of *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st* Century, ed. John E. Rotelle (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1992), 368.

window register to the apostles in the dome, from substantial sculptural relief to luminous glass mosaic, paralleled the chronological progression of the catechumens' altering ways of seeing before and during their baptism.

Christians in Late Antiquity believed that prophets were unique in belonging to the Jewish tradition and living under the Old Law but having foreknowledge of Christ through their prophecies. The prophets toed the line between spiritual blindness and visionary seeing. In the Orthodox Baptistery, the placement of the prophets in the window register suited their status as blind visionaries, since this notion was reinforced visually by the play between the sculpture and the architecture in the register. Eight large arches constitute the architecture of the register, one for each side of the building. Each of the large arches contains a set of three smaller arches beneath it [Fig. 25].[82] The large arch is the shallowest, while the three smaller ones recede one level deeper. The recession culminates in the central window, where the wall vanishes entirely. The arches are essentially clusters of nested voids that systematically empty the wall of its mass. However, the architectural recession is resisted sculpturally. In the largest arches, the recession was counteracted by the vines, crosses, and vases in the tympana, which were originally rendered in relief. At the next deepest level, the recession is checked by the prophets. The only point at which the architecture's progressive hollowing-out of the wall is not met by sculptural resistance is at the windows.

The play between recession and projection is further complicated by the fictive *aediculae*. The *aediculae* are low relief schematizations of imagined three-dimensional

[82] These colonettes were originally covered in plaster and painted, though this was removed in the 1780s. Kostof, *Orthodox Baptistery,* 75.

spaces [Fig. 26].[83] The real columns in front of the wall define the plane closest to the viewer's space; the shorter, fluted piers in relief mark the middle plane; and, in an example of inverse perspective, the taller piers in relief describe the plane furthest from the viewer.[84] The simulated architecture around the prophets illusionistically advances the recession into the wall begun by the real architecture.[85] At the same time, the *aediculae* project out slightly into real space. Visually, this tension between the architectural push outward and the sculptural push inward animates the wall and emphasizes the register's status as a threshold. Perforated by windows, the stucco register is a border between the inside of the Baptistery and the outside world. The prophets appear in a state of intermediacy, caught halfway between two spaces, the fictive one behind the picture plane and the real one in front of the wall. The push-and-pull relationship between the sculpture and architecture in the window register emphasizes the liminal status of the register's subjects. The dynamic tension between the reliefs and the architecture — between solid panels of earth and open spaces of reflected light — underscores the betwixt and between status of the prophets themselves as Old Testament "men made from earth" who had nonetheless received the light of prophecy.

In another sermon on John 9, Augustine distinguished between prophets, who were men and earthly, and prophecy, which was spiritual and heavenly:

> But in order to see, he is anointed with spittle and mud; not any sort of spittle, though, not anybody's, but Christ's. Christ's spittle is prophecy, mud is human beings; remember what man was made from. So when men prophesied, it was

[83] Paola Lopreato, "Disarticolazione e genesi dei motivi architettonici negli stucchi del Battistero Neoniano in Ravenna," *Felix Ravenna* 111/112 (1976): 126.

[84] Ibid., 127.

[85] Kostof, *Orthodox Baptistery,* 71–72.

> spittle in mud. Why should I talk about the old prophets? The apostle himself says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor 4:7).[86]

Augustine considered the contrast between humble dust and precious saliva in John 9 analogous to the phenomenon of prophecy itself. Like the opposing materiality in the Pauline metaphor, the prophets were earthly vehicles for spiritual truths. Peter Chrysologus went a step further in his own exegesis on John 9 to say that Christ's saliva was actually "light-bearing" (*luciferam*).[87] Chrysologus created an evocative image of earthly dust infused with divine light, which resonates with the material contrast between the glass and the stucco in the window register. The alternation of shadowed stucco and radiant glass surfaces embodied the idea that the Old Testament prophets were imperfect earthly vehicles for precious spiritual truths.

The materiality of the stucco prophets was a key to their interpretation. The fact that the prophets are made from stucco emphasized the belief that the Old Testament prophets' ability to see God was hindered not only by the fact that they had lived during the pre-Incarnation phase of history but also by their own carnality. What is more, catechumens could relate to the Old Testament prophets, who were models for their experience before baptism, before their corporeal eyes had been remade through the Sacrament. Understood in this way, it seems intentional that the prophets occupy the

[86] sed, ut uideat, inungitur sputo et luto; sed sputo non quocumque, non cuiuscumque, sed christi. sputum christi est prophetia, lutum homines. recordamini unde factus est homo. quando ergo prophetabant homines, sputum erat in luto. quid dicam de prophetis antiquis? ipse apostolus dicit: habemus thesaurum istum in uasis fictilibus. Augustine, *Sermones*, 136A, ed. Germain Morin, *MiAg* 1 (Rome: Tipografia poliglotta vaticana, 1930), 377; trans. Hill, *Sermons (94A–147A)*, 359.

[87] diuino ore luciferam dat saliuam, ut sancti roris gutta baptizaret oculos peccatoris, ut aperiat uenia, quos clauserat culpa. Chrysologus, *Sermo.*, 176.4.38–40, ed. Olivar, *CCSL* 24B, 1069; trans. Palardy, vol. 3 of *St. Peter Chrysologus*, 340–41.

window register, a border between the inside and outside worlds.[88] Iconographically, materially, and spatially, the prophets signal the catechumens' transition from their previous state of blindness outside the baptistery to their new state of vision inside. The prophets' presence between the windows reinforces the register's status as a boundary between a community of insiders who saw God and one of outsiders from whom such knowledge was withheld.

The *Aediculae* Scenes

So far, this chapter has argued that there was a motivated relationship between the materials used in and the pictorial content of the Orthodox Baptistery's stucco register; but the fact that Christ appears twice as an incarnate man in the same material as the Old Testament prophets could contradict that interpretation. Two scenes on the roofs of *aediculae* in the northwest corner of the building depict the *Traditio legis*, in which Christ hands the scroll of the New Law to Peter and Paul, and Christ Trampling the Beasts, in which he is dressed as a victorious soldier and crushes a snake and a lion underfoot [Fig. 27–28]. If the prophets are depicted as men made from earth to signal that they are spiritually blind creatures of the old creation, one might expect Christ as the New Adam to be represented in a different material to set him apart from that creation.

However, the christological scenes should not be read in opposition to the prophets but as complementary to them. The scenes do not illustrate narrative events

[88] Prophets often occur between windows in Late Antique decorative programs, such as in the apostolic basilicas in Rome or Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna. In the eighth century, Bede would use windows as metaphors for the doctors of the church: *Fenestrae templi doctores sunt sancti et spiritales quique in ecclesia quibus mente excedentibus deo archana secretorum caelestium specialius ceteris uidere conceditur. Qui dum ea quae in occulto uident publice fidelibus pandunt quasi suscepto lumine solis fenestrae cuncta templi penetralia replent.* Bede, *De templo*, 1.615–619, ed. David Hurst, *CCSL* 119A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), 162; Francesca dell'Acqua, *"Illuminando colorat": La vetrata tra l'età imperiale e l'alto medioevo: le fonti, l'archeologia*, Studi e ricerche di archeologia e storia dell'arte 4 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2003), 38.

from the Gospels but are allegories associated with prophecy and the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law. Although the iconography of the *Traditio legis* has no clear textual source, the concept depends on a typological relationship with the Old Law, which the New Law supersedes.[89] Galit Noga-Banai has argued that the juxtaposition of the *Traditio legis* with the scene of Moses receiving the Law in other contexts, including a small silver box in Thessaloniki, may have been inspired by the prophecy in Jeremiah 31:31, "The time is coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt" [Fig. 29].[90] The fact that in the Orthodox Baptistery's *Traditio legis*, Peter and Paul are depicted climbing up the slanted roof of the *aedicula* visually recalls depictions of Moses climbing up Mt. Sinai to receive the Old Law, as on the Thessaloniki casket [Fig. 30]. At the same time, the *Traditio legis* iconography as it occurs in other contexts also has eschatological overtones and is thought to represent Christ after the Resurrection.[91] In the representation of the scene in

[89] Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen, "Traditio legis?" *Cahiers archéologiques fin de l'Antiquité et Moyen Âge* 47 (1999): 8, 12–13. Walter N. *Schumacher*, "*Dominus legem dat,*" *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 54 (1959): 22; Franz Nikolasch, "Zur Deutung der '*Dominus-legem-dat*'-Szene," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 64 (1969): 35–73; Jean-Michel Spieser, *Autour de la "*Traditio Legis*"* (Thessaloniki: Ypourgeion politismou Eforeia vyzantinon archaiotiton Thessalonikis, 2004); Beat Brenk, *The Apse, the Image, and the Icon: An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images*, (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2010), 55; Robert Couzin, *The* Traditio Legis*: Anatomy of an Image* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2015).

[90] Galit Noga-Banai, *The Trophies of the Martyrs: An Art Historical Study of Early Christian Silver Reliquaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21; Regarding the position of the Traditio legis scenes in the mausoleum of Sta. Costanza in Rome, Couzin has observed: "Following a common inference with respect to other apse mosaics, the scene is considered to represent the eastern sky, an interpretation that gains some credence in the case of Santa Costanza from its position in the building. The *traditio* legis is in the left axial niche and the entrance is on the northeast. The viewer is therefore facing southeast. It may be going too far to suggest that this is roughly the direction of Jerusalem, but it is not likely an accident that the mosaic finds itself in as close to an eastern position as possible within the strictures imposed by the construction of the mausoleum." The *Traditio legis* scene in Ravenna is, however, in the northwest corner and so does not conform to this theory. Couzin, *Anatomy of an Image*, 10.

[91] Rasmussen, "Traditio legis?" 24. For further bibliography, see Noga-Banai, *Trophies of the Martyrs*, 17n37.

San Giovanni in Fonte, for example, Christ stands on a blue globe, suggesting that the scene "most probably indicates the second coming" [Fig. 31].[92] The *Traditio legis*, then, represents the fulfillment of Old Testament Law and prophecy while simultaneously suggesting a vision of something that has not happened yet. Likewise, the iconography of Christ Trampling the Beasts is based on verse 13 of Psalm 90 (91), "You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot."[93] The psalm was interpreted by Christians as a prophecy of Christ's triumph over death and the devil.[94] Late Antique viewers of the Christ Trampling the Beasts relief would see Christ as the Old Testament prophets saw him, through the mediating veil of prophetic allegory.

Two other scenes on the roofs of *aediculae* depict Old Testament types for Christ. A representation of Daniel in the Lions' Den occurs to the left of the *Traditio legis* and a representation of Jonah between two sea monsters appears to the right of Christ Trampling the Beasts [see Fig. 19, Fig. 32]. The Old Testament stories of Daniel and Jonah were widely interpreted as prefigurations of Christ's Resurrection.[95] All four scenes, therefore, may be read as allegorical representations of Christ.

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[92] Noga-Banai, *Trophies of the Martyrs*, 18; On the Traditio legis as a representation of Christ in heaven, see especially: Spieser, *Autour de la "*Traditio Legis*"*, 10–13.

[93] Christ Trampling the Beasts appears in the sixth-century oratory of Sant'Andrea in the episcopal palace in Ravenna, which was commissioned by Peter II (ca. 494–519). The theme also appears on fifth-century lamps from North Africa. Deichmann, *Ravenna-Kommentar,* 203; Gillian Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function, and Patronage* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 239–240; Jeffrey Spier (ed.), *Picturing the Bible: the Earliest Christian Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), nr. 53.

[94] Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* 90.2.6, ed. Dekkers and Fraipont, *CCSL* 39, 1276; Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum*, 90.218–221, ed. Marcus Adriaen, *CCSL* 98 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958), 834; Herbert L. Kessler, "Evil Eye(ing): Romanesque Art as a Shield of Faith," in *Romanesque Art and Thought in the Twelfth Century: Essays in Honor of Walter Cahn*, ed. Colum Hourihane, Occasional papers, Index of Christian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University 10 (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 2008), 112–113.

[95] The typological relationship between Jonah and the Resurrection was biblical. Matthew 12:40 reads: "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth." Though no comparable biblical verse ties

The four allegorical scenes supplement the stucco's register overall theme of imperfect, prophetic vision. Again, Augustine's exegesis on the miracle in John 9 provides a useful gloss for understanding the figures. In the biblical account of the man born blind, the healed man initially misidentifies Christ as a prophet. After the man is healed in the pool of Siloam, he is interrogated by Jewish officials. John 9:17 reads, "So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'" Augustine asserted that the man's answer to the question was inaccurate, since Christ was not a prophet in the Old Testament sense, but rather he fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. Augustine wrote: "In the Lord Christ was all prophecy fulfilled. Whoever does not recognize Christ walks around with his eyes anointed. And if by any chance he reads the prophet, he is a Jew."[96] By representing Christ typologically in the *aediculae* scenes, the makers of the Baptistery's program represented him as viewed by someone who saw spiritually but incompletely, like the prophets.

Compared to the animals flanking vases on top of the other twelve *aediculae*, the four allegorical scenes on the north and northwest sides of the Baptistery are exceptional. They form a focal point in the program. The best position for viewing the four reliefs would have been from in front of the southeast apsidiole, looking across the font to the

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Daniel to Christ's resurrection, the connection was often made in exegetical texts. For example, Hippolytus of Rome, an early commentator on Daniel writing in Greek around 202–204 CE, compared the sealing of the stone over the entrance to the lions' den with the sealing of Christ's tomb. Hippolytus of Rome, *Omterpretatis in Danielam*, 3.27.4–5, ed. and trans. Maurice Lefèvre, *Commentaire sur Daniel* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947), 251; see also William Travis, "Daniel in the Lion's Den: Problems in the Iconography of a Cistercian Manuscript. Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. 132," *Arte Medievale* 2nd ser. 14, no. 1/2 (2000): 53.

[96] quia in domino christo completa est omnis prophetia. qui non cognoscit christum inunctus ambulat. et si forte prophetam legit, iudaeus est. Augustine, *Sermones*, 136C, ed. Berrouard, *REAug* 24, 90; trans. Hill, *Sermons (94A-147A),* 368.

northwest corner. The reverse is true for viewing the mosaics in the dome.[97] The scene of Christ's Baptism in the oculus is oriented so that the heads of the figures point to the northwest, while the feet point southeast. The leaders of the apostolic procession around the oculus, Peter and Paul, also meet above the southeast apsidiole [Fig. 33]. One of the best positions for viewing the mosaics was from in front of the northwest apsidiole with one's back to the allegorical scenes in stucco.[98] This suggests that two purposefully constructed views were built into the Baptistery's decorative program, one intended for a person or group facing northwest and another for a person or group facing southeast. The former position would allow viewers to see the Old Testament prophecies, while the latter would allow them to see the New Testament theophany properly oriented.

The most common explanation for why the allegorical scenes are located where they are relates to the liturgy. At the beginning of the baptismal ritual on the night of Holy Saturday, the candidates would face west to renounce Satan before turning east to swear allegiance to Christ.[99] Facing toward a scene symbolizing Christ's triumph over the devil — the Trampling the Beasts — while verbally renouncing the devil would have emphasized the act of renunciation.[100] However, this argument only takes into account

[97] Deliyannis*, Ravenna,* 95.

[98] An even better position for viewing the mosaics would have been standing in the font, looking directly up into the dome. Ivanovici, "'Luce renobatus'," 24–25.

[99] Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, 60.

[100] Kostof, *Orthodox Baptistery*, 68; Deichmann, *Ravenna-Kommentar*, 45–46; Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 362. Ivan Foletti has recognized a discrepancy between the placement of the allegorical reliefs and the "renunciation of the devil" hypothesis, since the allegorical reliefs are not located on the west wall. If the baptizands were facing west when they renounced the devil, then the four allegorical reliefs would have been slightly to the side rather than directly in front of them. He has proposed an alternative explanation. Citing the inscription over the northeast apsidiole, which refers to Christ washing his disciples' feet, Foletti argued that after the baptizands' immersion in the font, they would proceed to the northeast apsidiole where the bishop would wash their feet. Ambrose of Milan's third commentary on baptism relates the act of washing a neophyte's feet to crushing a serpent underfoot, and so this moment of the liturgy could have inspired the Trampling the Beasts scene. However, Foletti's hypothesis is flawed in the same way as the renunciation of the devil hypothesis. The allegorical scenes do

one out of four iconographies in the group. In contrast, if one reads the four scenes as representations of Christ as the prophets saw him and symbols of imperfect spiritual sight, then the act of turning from west to east could realize the baptizands' transformation from blindness to sight. Turning away from the viewpoint that allowed them to see Old Testament allegories and toward a viewpoint that enabled them to see the Baptism of Christ properly oriented would have been a concrete performance of the transformation. Moreover, visual continuities between the northwest orientation and the southeast orientation affirm that these two views were interconnected. In particular, the representation of Peter and Paul converging at the foot of Christ's throne in the *Traditio legis* scene visually rhymed with the representation of Peter and Paul converging at the feet of Christ in the dome.

However, when considering the Baptistery's decorative program, it is important to consider the possibility of multiple audiences. Wharton has suggested that at the beginning of the baptismal rite, the bishop would have likely been waiting in front of an altar or episcopal throne in the southeast apsidiole, putting him in a position facing the allegorical reliefs in stucco.[101] Therefore, the original intended audience for the stucco reliefs could have also included the bishop. In particular, a scene like the *Traditio legis*, which symbolized Christ investing authority in his earthly representatives, would have been meaningful for an episcopal audience.[102]

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not occur directly above the northeast apsidiole and his argument only takes into account one out of four iconographies in the group. Foletti, "Saint Ambroise et le Baptistère," 140–141.

[101] Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 364.

[102] The use of the *Traditio legis*, especially if a bishop was part of the intended audience, could reveal something about the rivalry between Rome and Ravenna in the fifth century. Neon's decision to redecorate the Baptistery in the 450s has been interpreted by Wharton and others as a response to the fact that Pope Sixtus III renovated the Lateran Baptistery in the 430s. Moreover, the text of Neon's dedicatory inscription, which demanded: "Yield, old name, yield, age to newness!" (*Cede, uetus nomen, nouitati cede*

The *aediculae* scenes in the stucco register are small, and as previously mentioned, questions of their visibility must be kept in mind. Although the scenes are easy to see today while visiting the Baptistery during daylight hours, they would have been harder to see at night in the fifth century.[103] That said, the fact that the scenes exist at all indicates that someone at the time of designing the Baptistery's program was thinking about these issues. It is possible that the images did not have to be perfectly legible to be meaningful.[104]

One other shared quality unites the four allegorical scenes on the north and northwest sides of the building as a thematic group, namely their use in funerary contexts.

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uetustas!), copies a dedicatory inscription in S. Pietro in Vincoli, written under Sixtus III. The *Traditio legis* was a typically Roman iconography, linked to the fact that the city boasted the relics of both Peter and Paul and that the pope claimed special authority as the heir of Peter. The appropriation of the *Traditio legis* in Ravenna could be more evidence in favor of the theory that the Baptistery was built in competitive response to the Lateran Baptistery. Recently, however, Ivan Foletti and Irene Quadri have cast doubt on how exclusive the *Traditio legis* iconography was to Rome in Late Antiquity, suggesting that the special association of the iconography with the city of Rome developed during the Gregorian Reform. Agnellus, *L.P.R.*, 27.175.11, ed. Deliyannis, *CCCM* 199, 175; trans. Deliyannis, *The Book of Pontiffs,* 125; Deichmann, *Ravenna-Kommentar*, 17, 26; Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 368; Deliyannis, *Ravenna*, 89; Rasmussen, "Traditio legis?" 14; Ivan Foletti and Irene Quadri, "Roma, l'Oriente e il mito della Traditio Legis," *Opuscula historiae atrium* 62, no. 1 (2013): 16–37.

[103] For example, other baptisteries in the fifth and sixth centuries had ciboria over their fonts, including the Lateran Baptistery. If the Orthodox Baptistery also had a ciborium, the canopy might have obstructed lines of sight inside the building. However, I find it unlikely that the Baptistery in Ravenna had a ciborium, since such a structure would have obstructed the view of the dome when baptizands stood in the font. Sebastian Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 27 (Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1998), nr. 403, p. 190.

[104] While discussing the illegibility and aesthetics of abundance in Late Antique mosaic programs, Beat Brenk has asserted: "that an image must be painted or chiselled solely to be viewed is a thoroughly modern idea." Cynthia Hahn has also argued that many Late Antique and early medieval treasury objects were hidden from view for most of the year, and yet, the fact that they were not visible did not render their materials or imagery meaningless. Peter Scott Brown and Kirk Ambrose have also worked on the question of the meaning retained by invisible images and objects in the Romanesque period. Beat Brenk, "Visibility and (Partial) Invisibility of Early Christian Images," in *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Giselle de Nie, Karl F. Morrison, and Marco Moste (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 157; Cynthia Hahn, "The Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries," in Reudenbach and Toussaint, *Reliquiare im Mittelalter*, 2; Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 96; Peter Scott Brown, "As Excement to Sacrament: The Dissimulated Pagan Idol of Ste-Marie d'Oloron" *Art Bulletin* 87, no. 4 (2005), 571–588; Kirk Ambrose, "'Cunningly Hidden:' Invisible and Forgotten Relics in the Romanesque Work of Art," in *Medieval and Early Modern Devotional Objects in Global Perspective: Translations of the Sacred*, ed. Elizabeth Ann Robertson and Jennifer Jahner (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 79–96.

Daniel, Jonah, Christ Trampling the Beasts, and the *Traditio legis* were all popular subjects for sarcophagi.[105] The Daniel and Jonah scenes make sense as subjects for sarcophagi because of those stories were typological prefigurations of Christ's Resurrection, and the Christ Trampling the Beast scene also connoted notions of triumph over death. The *Traditio legis*' use in funerary contexts could be connected to the image's eschatological overtones.

Late Antique baptisteries often adopt funerary imagery, due to the fact that Christians believed that the Sacrament meant the death of the old, sinful self and the resurrection of a new, more godly self. This notion was rooted in biblical passages, such as Romans 6:3–5.

> Do you not know that all we who have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into his death? For we were buried with him by means of baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has risen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the likeness of death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also.

Seizing on biblical notions of death and rebirth, Ambrose of Milan famously declared that the Sacrament was a way for a person to die and rise again without literally, physically dying. As such, "the baptismal font is like a tomb."[106] Consequently, Late Antique baptisteries also have architectural parallels with tombs. A centralized plan and pronounced verticality were defining characteristics of both Early Christian mausoleums and baptisteries.[107]

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[105] Kollwitz and Herdejürgen, *Die ravennatischen Sarkophage*, nr. B1, B3, B4, B6, B7, B8, B15.

[106] Ideo fons quasi sepultura est. Ambrose, *De sacr.*. 2.6.19, ed. Faller, *CSEL* 73, 34.

[107] For an early study on the architectural relationship between baptisteries and tombs, see Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 22–31; for a more recent overview see Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 160–165.

Compositional choices in the Orthodox Baptistery's stucco register also have counterparts in Late Antique funerary art. The best comparison is the Mausoleum of Quirinus beneath San Sebastiano in Rome.[108] This semi-circular mausoleum, also known as the Platonia, is dated to around 400 and was dedicated to the fourth-century martyr Quirinus of Sescia [Fig. 34]. Fourteen *arcosolia* originally lined the walls, though only twelve are still extant. The wall in front of each *arcosolium* supported Corinthian pilasters, clusters of vegetation, and incised, fictive ribbons in stucco. The interior of each *arcosolium* contained figural reliefs in stucco, though only the *arcosolium* to the left of the entrance on the east wall remains relatively intact. The back wall of the niche is subdivided into smaller rectangular fields, each outlined by a thin, beaded frame. The central frame contains fragments of a standing male figure, wearing a toga, and facing frontally with one arm raised, a stance similar to those adopted by the Orthodox Baptistery prophets. Though this niche is the only one that remains relatively intact, the other thirteen *arcosolia* probably also once contained human figures. As a rounded space lined by arched *arcosolia* that contain robed figures in stucco relief, the Mausoleum of Quirinus and similar structures can be taken as precursors to the Orthodox Baptistery's stucco register.[109]

The Baptistery's stucco register carried material and pictorial associations with the creation narrative in Genesis, as well as alluding to death and funerary art

[108] Massimo Bonelli, "S. Sebastiano," in *Roma e l'età carolingia; Atti delle giornate di studio 3–8 maggio 1976,* ed. Istituto de storia dell'arte dell'Università di Roma (Rome: Multigrafica, 1976), 302–303; Kessler, "Séroux's Decadent Column," 13; Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco,* 73–76.

[109] Similar structures could include the tomb of the Valerii (ca. 160 CE) in Rome, where the walls are also lined with fictive arcades populated by stucco statues. Claudine Allag and Nicole Blanc, "Vouneuil et la Tradition des Stucs antiques," in Sapin, *Stucs et décors,* 109.

iconographically and compositionally.[110] In other words, two opposing concepts converge in a single paradoxical register. The merging of these concepts in the Baptistery's stucco register can be compared to earlier Prometheus and Genesis sarcophagi, which represent the origin of human beings on objects used to commemorate deaths [Fig. 35]. As Helga Kaiser-Minn has argued, such sarcophagi use the image of a divine sculptor to play on the symmetry between the beginning of life and its end.[111] The stucco register in the Orthodox Baptistery encapsulates a similar idea. Death and recreation were inextricably connected in the Late Antique imagination, particularly in the context of a baptistery where new initiates to the Christian community symbolically died and were reborn.

Conclusions

The Orthodox Baptistery is a uniquely well-preserved Late Antique monument. No other building from the period preserves a similar program of figural stuccoes. Indeed, with the notable exception of the Mausoleum of Quirinus, most stucco sculpture from the period that has survived *in situ* occurs in the form of non-figural cornices and

[110] Maurizio Bettini has argued that in classical Antiquity plaster was perceived to have preservative and generative properties, making it an ideal material for death masks. Regarding gypsum's preservative qualities, Bettini pointed to Roman agricultural treatises that describe plaster seals over the mouths of amphorae to keep the contents of the vessels preserved while in storage. Regarding its generative properties, he pointed to a myth in Firmicus Maternus' *De errore profanarum religionum* (ca. 346), in which Jupiter ordered a plaster statue of his son, Liber, to be made after Liber was killed and eaten by Titans. Only Liber's heart was not eaten, and the plaster portrait was made to hold the heart. Bettini argued the story was a variation on an older Orphic myth in which Dionysus is killed and eaten by Titans. In the Orphic version of the myth, after Dionysus was eaten, Jupiter retaliated by striking the Titans with lighting, which pulverized them into a type of gypsum dust, *titanos*, and a vapor, *aithalë*. The mixture of dust and vapor was believed to have coalesced into the first human beings. Bettini concluded gypsum was both a material capable of preserving bodies and "awakening life, and thus there could be no better place for the slain god to await his rebirth than in an iconic container made of plaster, *ex gypso*." Bettini's thesis is highly imaginative and too interesting not to mention in relation to the funerary valences of the stucco reliefs in the Orthodox Baptistery. Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6.4, ed. Robert Turcan, Collection Guillaume Budé (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982); Maurizio Bettini, *The Portrait of the Lover*, trans. Laura Gibbs (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999), 29–37.

[111] Helga Kaiser-Minn. *Die Erschaffung des Menschen auf den spätantiken Monumenten des 3. und 4. Jahrhunderts* (Münster, Wesfalen: Aschendorff, 1981), 83–84.

soffit decorations.[112] The purpose of such reliefs was to articulate areas of spatial transition around windows and doors, to mark the seams between registers of decoration, and to complement mosaic and marble.[113] Paulinus of Nola (353–431) alluded to stucco's usefulness in this capacity, when in a description of the basilica at Nola, he referred to "an inserted ridge of plaster [that] joins or separates (*coniungit aut diuidit*) the borders of wall and vault."[114]

Numerous fragments of non-figural stucco reliefs have been uncovered in archaeological excavations or still survive *in situ*. In Ravenna, pieces of small semi-columns, capitals, and cornices in stucco dating to the fifth century were discovered during the excavations of Santa Croce.[115] Vegetal scrolls in stucco relief also remain in good condition in the intradoses of the sixth-century arcades of San Vitale [Fig. 36]. In Rome, a stucco cornice in Santa Maria Maggiore and vegetal scrolls in the intradoses of an arcade in Santa Maria in Cosmedin both date to the fifth century.[116] Architectural embellishments in stucco may have even been integrated into the monumental pictorial

[112] Another unusual example of figural sculpture in stucco was uncovered during the archaeological excavations of an aristocratic house or palace in Salamis on Cyprus, where the remains of a frieze representing hunting scenes were discovered, dating to the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century. A few very fragmentary figural reliefs from Santa Croce in Ravenna survive. The reliefs at Vouneuil-sous-Biard, which depicted toga-clad figures beneath an arcade are another possible exception, probably dating to the sixth century. However, the Cyprus, Ravenna, and Vouneuil examples are no longer *in situ*. They all were discovered in archaeological excavations. Olivier Callot, "Présentation des décors en stuc du bâtiment dit de "l'Huilerie" à Salamine," in *Salamine de Chypre, histoire et archéologie : état des recherches; Actes du Colloque international du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Lyon, 13-17 mars 1978*, ed. Marguerite Yon (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1980), 342; Pavan, "Il problema della decorazione a stucco," 163–165; Allag and Blanc, "Vouneuil," 113–114.

[113] Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco*, 10; Pinza, "Decorazioni in stucco," 31–64; Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevedo, "Policromia e polimateria nelle opere d'arte della tarda antichità e dell'alto medioevo," *Felix Ravenna* 4, no. 1 (1970): 223–259; Wataghin, "Lo stucco nei sistemi decorative," 115–124.

[114]Inferiore autem balteo, quo parietis et camerae confinium interposita gypso crepido coniungit aut diuidit Paulinus of Nola, *Epistula*, 32.11.22, ed. G. Hartel, *CSEL* 29 (Leipzig: 1894), 286; trans. P.G. Walsh, vol. 2 of *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1967), 144–145.

[115] Pavan, "Il problema della decorazione," 161–162, 166; Pasquini, "I 'gipsea metalla'," 49.

[116] Pasquini, *La decorazione a stucco,* 71–73.

cycles in the naves of Old Saint Peter's and San Paolo fuori le mura. The late fourth and early fifth century decorative programs from these sites are now destroyed and known only through later descriptions [Fig. 37].[117] At both basilicas, though, the intradoses of the arcades in the naves were likely covered in stucco relief.[118] Above the arcades, one nave wall featured Old Testament scenes from Genesis and Exodus, while the facing wall depicted scenes from the New Testament. The narratives on both walls were organized in superimposed registers, and the individual scenes were set within architectural grids made up of classical colonnettes. Whether these colonettes were painted in illusionistic fresco or sculpted in stucco relief is debated, and with the original programs now destroyed, it is impossible to prove definitively either way.[119] However, that architectural ornament in stucco relief was part of these two hugely influential decorative programs, at least on the arcades, is fairly certain.

The argument made in this chapter cannot be mapped onto most Late Antique monuments, which use stucco for non-figural architectural embellishments, since the interpretation relies on a close connection between material and subject matter. When

[117] Herbert L. Kessler, "'Caput et speculum omnium ecclesiarum': Old St. Peter's and Church Decoration in Medieval Latium," in *Italian Church Decoration of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: Functions, Forms, and Regional Traditions,* ed. William Tronzo (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1989), 119–123.

[118] Kessler, "Séroux's Decadent Column," 13.

[119] For Kessler, whether or not the colonnettes were stucco has repercussions for the dating of San Paolo's program, because such reliefs could be compared to the stucco colonnettes that survive in the Mausoleum of Quirinus. Hans Belting has speculated that the medium of the frames changed over time. The colonnettes may have been rendered in stucco when the decorative program was first created in the early fifth century, but some of these reliefs eventually deteriorated and had to be replaced by fictive painting during Cavallini's restorations in the thirteenth century. Ibid., 15–17; idem., "'Caput et speculum'," 124; Hans Belting, *Die Oberkirche von San Francesco in Assisi: ihre Dekoration als Aufgabe und die Genese einer neuen Wandmalerei* (Berlin: Mann, 1977), 156; see also Karl Stamm, *Probleme des Bildes und der Dekoration in mittelitalienischen Freskenzyklen der Zeit um 1300 bis in die Mitte des Quattrocento* (PhD diss., Bonn: Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1974), 104.

stucco was used in Late Antiquity, the connection to Genesis should be considered a possible, but not a predetermined, aspect of the material's meaning.

However, at least one broadly applicable point from the Orthodox Baptistery should be emphasized, namely the significance of technique as a bearer of meaning in Late Antique art. In the Baptistery, it was not the fact that the stucco reliefs were made from a lime-based substance that allowed a connection to the mud in Genesis to be drawn. Mud and stucco are, after all, different things. Rather, it was the fact that that stucco had been modeled that enabled this association. Indeed, the Late Antique authors cited in this chapter treated modeled materials interchangeably. John Chrysostom slipped back and forth between saying mud and wax in his sermon on Colossians. Avitus of Vienne's poem on Genesis freely elided the differences between wax, stucco, and clay, as if naming one substance was the same as naming the others. The one thing wax, stucco, and clay have in common is their malleability; they can be modeled into recognizable forms. What links these materials is not a shared substance, but a common artistic process of production, and this process carried meaning.

In his introduction to material iconology, Raff distinguished between an iconology of matter and an iconology of technique.

> Ein weiteres Problem stellt gelegentlich die Abgrenzung zwischen Material und künsterlischer Technik dar. Es wäre etwa zu überlegen, ob der ikonologische Unterschied zwischen einer Haustein- und einer Ziegelfassade eher ein Unterschied der Werkstoffe oder einer der Techniken ist; ähnlich bei Vergleichen zwischen Mosaik und Fresko, Relief und Malerei, Ölbild und Photographie.[120]

Raff concluded that his work would focus on matter as a bearer of meaning in art, and he left it to future researchers to explore the semantics of techniques, even though the two

[120] Raff, *Sprache der Materialien,* 16.

concepts could not really be separated. This chapter's analysis of the Orthodox Baptistery has begun to explore the ways in which viewer attentiveness to how something was made inflected meaning. The next chapter will consider the semantics of techniques more fully in the *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale del Friuli.

The *Tempietto Longobardo*: Semantics of Techniques

Composite and Homogenous Structures in Medieval Art

In Chapter Thirteen of his *Glory of the Martyrs*, Gregory of Tours gives an extraordinary account of an early medieval gemmed cross.[1] He describes how the bishop of Bazas, a city in southwestern France, once held a Mass to thank God for his aid during a siege. During the Mass, three drops of an unspecified, heavenly substance, like crystal but brighter, miraculously appeared and fell from the vault of the church. After orbiting the altar for a time, the three drops were caught on a silver paten where they congealed into a single, clear gem. The miracle, Gregory explains, disproved the Arian heresy that held that Christ was inferior to God the Father, since like the Trinity the miraculous gem consisted of three co-equal parts joined into one indissoluble whole. The faithful at Bazas commemorated the event by commissioning a precious, metalwork cross to hold the crystal that had confirmed their orthodoxy. However, making an acceptable setting for the gem proved unexpectedly complicated.

> The people collected gold and precious jewels and made a cross in which they deposited this gem. In the presence of this gem all the other jewels immediately fell out. The bishop then realized that heavenly things (*coelestibus*) could not associate with earthly things (*terrenis*). A cross was made from purest gold. The bishop set the gem in the middle of the intersection [of the arms of the cross] and offered it for the congregation to adore.[2]

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[1] Cynthia Hahn has also discussed the crystal in this account. However, she focuses on a later moment in the narrative when the crystal begins to function as a detector of evil; the account describes how the crystal would remain clear when in the presence of a sinless man, but darken in the presence of a sinful man. Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 22, 96.

[2] Tunc gavisus populus, et intelligens munus sibi indultum fuisse divinitus, conferens aurum gemmasque pretiosas, crucem fecit, in qua hanc gemmam statuit. Sed protinus omnes reliquae gemmae hac accedente ceciderunt. Tunc pontifex intelligens non esse consortium coelestibus cum terrenis, fabricata cruce ex auro purissimo, eam gemmam media intercapedine locat, et populo adorandam praebet. Gregory of Tours, *De Gloria Beatorum Martyrum*, 13, ed. J.P. Migne, *PL* 71 (Paris: 1849), col. 718B; trans. Raymond Van Dam,

The reasons a jewel-encrusted cross was deemed unfit to hold a heavenly crystal are not obvious. After all, in the Middle Ages gemstones often carried celestial connotations, as the Heavenly Jerusalem itself was believed to be "adorned with every jewel."[3] However, like many artistic materials, precious metals and gemstones were versatile in early medieval art and literature. Depending on the context in which they appeared, rare and radiant materials could signify anything from the highest celestial virtues to base, worldly materialism.[4] In the Bazas story, gems clearly fall on the terrestrial end of their semantic spectrum.

Yet, the gemmed cross in Gregory's account was not considered earthly because of its materials *per se*. If substances associated with worldly wealth were deemed unsuitable for Bazas's heavenly crystal, then certainly the gold cross would have been equally objectionable, not to mention the silver paten on which the crystal initially coalesced. What distinguished the first cross from the second was its aggregate nature. The first cross was a collection of various materials, both gold and jewels and — if it ever truly existed — may have looked something like the famous, ninth-century Ardennes cross [Fig. 38]. In contrast, the second and ultimately acceptable cross was made from a single substance, pure gold. The first was heterogeneous in its material makeup and the second homogeneous. Furthermore, because the first cross was a composite artifact, it could fall to pieces. Its disintegration served as a foil to the earlier fusion of the three heavenly drops into a single crystal. A dichotomy between composite and homogenous

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Gregory of Tours: The Glory of Martyrs (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 34.

[3] Rev. 21:19

[4] On the tension between associating gold with worldly wealth and simultaneously using it to symbolize heavenly treasures, see Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 165.

objects, rather than a material distinction between jewels and metals, signaled the larger opposition between earthly things and heavenly things in the Bazas narrative. In other words, the specific material identity of the substances had less bearing on how the two crosses in the Bazas miracle were perceived and classified than the underlying structures of each object. Gregory of Tours's account provides a valuable record of a medieval approach to material artifacts that gave priority to overall structure above individual substance. Meaning was determined by criteria external to the materials themselves, by the relationship between parts to whole, and by acts of assemblage and refinement used to construct objects.

This chapter examines the ways in which an awareness of how images were made inflected the meaning of one early medieval monument, the eighth-century oratory of Santa Maria in Valle, better known as the *Tempietto Longobardo*. The decorative program in the *Tempietto* is characterized by a visual dialogue between two media: stucco sculpture and fresco painting. Based on the technical idiosyncrasies of producing stucco and fresco, stucco can be thought of as a fundamentally composite medium, while fresco is more uniform in its make-up. Like the two crosses in the Bazas miracle, the juxtaposition of heterogeneous and homogeneous forms in the *Tempietto Longobardo* allowed the chapel's makers to engage with larger issues of theology and orthodoxy that were topics of considerable debate at the moment when the building was constructed in the third quarter of the eighth century.

The *Tempietto Longobardo*

The *Tempietto Longobardo* is a small chapel in Cividale del Friuli, a town near what is today the Italian border with Slovenia. The chapel was located on the

southeastern edge of the early medieval city in a topographic zone that has been known as "the Valley" since at least the ninth century. The Valley encompasses roughly 4,500 square meters on the edge of a steep cliff overlooking the Natisonne River.[5] The earliest medieval description of this part of the city occurs in a Carolingian diploma issued by Louis the Pious and Lothar in 830, which mentions the zone when it grants permission to the patriarch of Aquileia, Maxentius II, to take the female monastery in the Valley under his jurisdiction.[6]

> On the authority of God, the patriarch of [the church of] St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Hermagoras, martyr and bishop, appealed to our mercy that we [Louis the Pious and Lothar] should relinquish to his control the female monastery, which is called Santa Maria located next to the basilica of San Giovanni built within the city walls of the Forum Iulii [Cividale] in the place that is called "the Valley" of the aforementioned Mother of the Church.[7]

In the early Middle Ages, then, Cividale's Valley contained both a basilica dedicated to St. John and a female monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The *Tempietto Longobardo* stands directly to the northeast of the basilica of San Giovanni, which was first built in the seventh century [Fig. 39].[8] Even though the chapel is architecturally

[5] Mario Brozzi, "Richerche sulla zona detta 'Valle' in Cividale del Friuli," *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia* 45 (1972/73): 243.

[6] Though nominally from Aquileia, the patriarch had resided in Cividale since 737, when the patriarch Callistus (*sed*. 730–756) built a palace there. Hjalmar Torp, *L'Architettura del Tempietto*, vol. 2 of *Il Tempietto Longobardo di Cividale* (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1977), 225; Maria Antonietta di Girolamo, "Il complesso episcopale," in *Cividale Longobarda: Materiali per una rilettura archeologica,* ed. Silva Lusuardi Siena (Milan: I.S.U. Univeristà Cattolica, 2002), 41–42.

[7] Nostram imploravit clementiam uti monasterium Puellarum quod dicitur Sanctae Mariae, quod est situm iuxta Basilicam Sancti Iohannis, constructum infra muros civitatis Foroiuliensis in loco qui dicitur Vallis praedictae matri Ecclesiae S. Marci Evangelistae et S. Hermacorae martyris et Pontificis, ubi auctore Deo ipse Patriarcha preest, traderemus. Latin taken from C.G. Mor, "Notizie storiche sul Monastero di Santa Maria in Valle," in Torp, *L'Architettura*, 245.

[8] Laura Codini, "La Chiesa di San Giovanni in Valle," in Lusuardi Siena, *Cividale Longobarda*, 91.

separate from the basilica, it probably functioned as a dependent satellite of the larger church, given its small size (roughly 10 m x 6.2 m) and location.[9]

Despite Carlo Cecchelli's early hypothesis that the *Tempietto Longobardo* was part of the convent of Santa Maria in Valle, there is little real reason to assume a connection between the chapel and the monastery in the eighth and early ninth centuries.[10] As Hjalmar Torp pointed out, the wording of the 830 diploma, especially the phrase "*iuxta basilicam sancti Iohannis*," implies that the basilica of San Giovanni and the women's monastery of Santa Maria in Valle were adjacent but separate entities.[11] Had the basilica or its associated satellite chapel, the *Tempietto*, been part of the monastery, one would expect the diploma to explicitly mention the fact when transferring jurisdiction over the monastery to the patriarch in 830. In later centuries, the monastery of Santa Maria in Valle did gain control of both the basilica and the chapel, but in the early Middle Ages the basilica and *Tempietto* seem to have operated autonomously from the monastery.

Architecturally, the *Tempietto* is divided into two parts: a large, square *aula* covered by a groin vault to the west and a slightly smaller, rectangular presbytery covered by three barrel vaults to the east [Fig. 40–41]. The early medieval decoration of the presbytery survives in poor condition. Only a small portion of mosaic remains *in situ* beside the window in the south aisle, but the three vaults in the presbytery were all likely once decorated in mosaic [Fig. 42].[12] Two reused marble architraves support the central

[9] Torp, *L'Architettura*, 226.

[10] Carlo Cecchelli, *I monumenti del Friuli dal secolo IV all'XI* (Milan-Rome: Rizzoli & C. Editori, 1943), 147–150.

[11] Torp, *L'Architettura*, 228.

[12] Ibid., 95.

vault. These are set on two corbels in the east wall and on four marble columns with limestone capitals on the west end [Fig. 43]. Unlike the architraves, the limestone capitals do not appear to be reused from earlier contexts and were probably carved at the time of construction.[13]

A fragmentary donor inscription painted in white letters against a dark purple background and framed in a border of fictive pearls begins in the south aisle of the presbytery and continues onto the south wall of the *aula* [Fig. 44].[14] Sergio Tavano has reconstructed the text as:

5 [……..] VERS [……..] DONATIS
6 POSSEDERET PROPRIO DEI C[…]
7
8 [….] IM […..] V […] V [….] I VIRGO SALVTEM
[…]
13 [……] RCI […] ITORI […] FVNVS ACERBVM
14 CHRISTE FAVE VOTIS POPVLI VOCESQVE PRECANTIS
15 [audi…]S REMOVE
16 [longi]NQVE LITES ATQVE PRVD[enter in pace]
[…]
21 [……..] ANTE[q]VAM HIC VIRTVTE
22 REDEMTORIS OVES [rag]ASQVE PIOS AVCTORES
23 CVLMIN[is …….] NT [……...]
24 […..] PA [….] A […] N [a]RCES IA[m] TEMPLO [beato].[15]

Despite the twenty-four-line hexameter poem's incomplete state of preservation, it reveals several important pieces of information. First, the chapel seems to have had a

[13] Part of the reason L'Orange favored a date for the Tempietto in the 750s or 760s was based on a stylistic comparison between these column capitals and the capitals on the slightly earlier Tegurium of Callistus. L'Orange, *La scultura*, 131–137; John Mitchell, "The Uses of Spolia in Longobard Italy," in *Antike Spolien in der Architektur des Mittelalters und der Renaissance,* ed. Hugo Brandenburg and Joachim Poeschke (Munich: Hirmer, 1996), 94.

[14] C.G. Mor, "La grande iscrizione dipinta del Tempietto Longobardo di Cividale," *Acta ad archaeologiam et atrium historiam pertinentia* 2, no. 2 (1982): 95.

[15] Sergio Tavano, *Il Tempietto Longobardo di Cividale* (Udine: Edizioni longobarde, 1990), 80–81; Mor filled in more of the blanks in the inscription in his own work on the verses, though I prefer Tavano's more conservative reconstruction. Mor, "La grande iscrizione," 118–121; For a synthesis of the differing reconstructions that have been suggested for the inscription see Silvia Cernuschi, "L'iscrizione dipinta del Tempietto," in Lusuardi Siena, *Cividale Longobarda,* 161–174.

dual dedication to the Virgin (*Virgo salutem* in the eighth line) and Christ (*Christe* in the fourteenth line). Second, in the twenty-second line, the inscription mentions "pious authors" (*pios auctores*) in the plural, indicating that there were two or more patrons involved in the commission. If the inscription once provided specific names, these are now lost. Finally, the reference to "bitter death" (*funus acerbum*) in the thirteenth line followed by the invocation, "Christ, favor the prayers" (*Christe fave votis*) in the fourteenth, gestures to the memorial function of the building.

Although the donor inscription's alludes to "bitter death," no archaeological evidence indicates that the chapel contained burials in the eighth century.[16] However, an early modern copy of a thirteenth-century *inventio reliquarium* records the discovery of a trove of relics inside the *Tempietto*, which occurred on May 5, 1242.[17] The *inventio,* copied in 1533, is currently kept in the Biblioteca Civica in Udine.[18] It not only records the discovery of the relics, but also names "Petrude, illustrious queen of the Lombards" as the founder of the female monastery of Santa Maria in Valle.[19] There are reasons to

[16] Torp hypothesized that there might have been a tomb in the floor of the chapel, but this argument has been questioned by Marilena Casirani, Silvia Cernuschi, and Laura Codini. At a later date, a sarcophagus was constructed out of two spoliated pieces of carved marble, which were taken from an eighth-century pulpit, probably from the basilica of San Giovanni next door. The exact date of the construction of the sarcophagus is unknown, beyond the fact that it was installed sometime after the presbytery floor was raised in the thirteenth century. It is possible that the tomb was installed in the thirteenth century under the orders of the abbess of the monastery of Santa Maria in Valle, Gisla de Pertica (r. 1242–1251) or in the late fourteenth century under Abbess Margarita della Torre (r. 1371–1402). The sarcophagus is traditionally believed to contain the bones of Pertrude, who was an early abbess of a female monastery in Salt and will be discussed at the end of this chapter. The re-use of older marbles to make a tomb for Pertrude may have been part of a project to communicate the age and authority of the relics. The components of the pulpit-turned-tomb are currently kept against the north wall of the presbytery, now dismantled. Torp, *L'Architettura,* 63–66; Marilena Casirani, Silvia Cernuschi, and Laura Codini, "Dati per una riconsiderazione del Tempietto longobardo," in Lusuardi Siena, *Cividale Longobarda,* 110–111, 134; L'Orange, *La scultura*, 143–144.

[17] Mor, "Notizie Storiche," 252.

[18] Ibid., 255.

[19] Magnifica et potens domina et quamplurimum Deo devota sterii Sanctae Mariae in Valle Civitatis Foriiulii. Magnifica et potens domina et quamplurimum Deo devota Petrudis nomine, illustris Lombardiae

doubt the reliability of the *inventio* as a source of information about Cividale in the Lombard period, including the glaring problem that no independent historical evidence indicates that a Lombard queen named "Petrude" ever existed.[20] Despite the fact that details offered in the *inventio* are dubious, the general idea that the *Tempietto* functioned as a shrine for relics does seem likely. Its location beside San Giovanni supports this interpretation, since as an auxiliary structure adjacent to a much larger basilica, it is similar in location to earlier *martyria*.[21] The evidence, therefore, indicates that the chapel was used as an oratory to pray for intercession on behalf of the donors, in addition to being a space to hold relics.[22] This led Torp to describe the chapel's function as an "oratorio-reliquiario."[23]

The decoration of the *aula* survives in much better condition than that of the presbytery. The west wall is the best preserved, and from it, one can extrapolate parts of what has been lost from the other walls. Three registers of decoration adorn the wall [see Fig. 2]. The lowest originally supported a Proconnesian marble revetment;[24] while the middle register combines two-dimensional fresco painting with three-dimensional bands

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regina, ad laudem et honorem et gloriam Dei, beatissimae Virginis Mariae, sanctarum virginum et martyrum Anastasiae, Agapae, Cioniae et Yrenes et sanctorum martyrum Grysogoni et Zoylis, devotum et nobile monasterium dominarum religiosarum ordinis s. patris Benedicti in pago Foroiuliensi construxit in Civitate Austria, nominans ipsum monasterium Sancta Maria in Valle. Ibid., 255.

[20] "Pertrude" is sometimes thought to be a substitution for Giseltrude, the wife of Aistulf, who was the duke of Friuli before becoming king of the Lombards in 749. Tavano, *Il Tempietto Longobardo*, 46.

[21] Torp cited the San Vittore in ciel d'oro next to San Ambrogio in Milan as well as the cruciform chapels beside Santa Giustina in Padua, Santi Apostili in Verona, and San Simpliciano in Milan as examples of "satellite" martyria. Torp, *L'Architettura*, 226.

[22] L'Orange, *La scultura*, 127. On the relationship between funerary chapels and *martyria* see Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels*, 233ff.

[23] Hjalmar Torp, *Il Tempietto Longobardo: La cappella palatina di Cividale*, ed. Valentino Pace (Cividale del Friuli: Comune di Cividale del Friuli, 2006), 14.

[24] Several slabs of marble were uncovered in both the presbytery and the *aula* during excavations. The revetment is also described in the 1533 *inventio reliquarium*, which provides a description of the interior of the chapel as it stood in the sixteenth century. L'Orange, *La scultura*, 79, 84–85; Casirani, Cernuschi, and Codini, "Dati per una riconsiderazione," 122.

of ornamental stucco. The middle register is organized around a central lunette framed by openwork grapevines. The fresco inside the lunette depicts a half-length figure of a long-haired, beardless Christ flanked by the archangels, Michael and Gabriel, who are identified by inscriptions [Fig. 45].

Originally, the north and south walls also had lunette frescoes in their middle registers. The north fresco is badly damaged, but enough survives to indicate that it once depicted the Virgin Mary holding the Christ child, flanked by angels, while the south fresco is completely destroyed [Fig. 46–47]. A standing, male saint in fresco appears to either side of each lunette. With two such figures on each wall, there are six male saints in all, five military saints and one bishop in the southeast corner. One of the military saints is identified in an inscription as St. Hadrian, but if the other saints were similarly identified, these inscriptions are now lost [Fig. 48].

In the upper register on the west wall, six female saints modeled in stucco are arranged symmetrically around a central window. Rendered in deep relief, each figure stands just under two meters tall, making them some of the largest extant figural sculptures to survive from the early Middle Ages. The stucco was originally painted, but by the mid-twentieth century, L'Orange could find only traces of color on the lips, eyes, and eyebrows of three of the saints.[25] The upper registers on the north and south walls may have also had a similar set of stucco figures set between the windows, but this level of decoration is now lost.[26] A gold mosaic originally covered the vault of the *aula*,

[25] L'Orange, *La scultura*, 30; Kiilerich, "Color and Context," 9–24; idem., "The Rhetoric of Materials in the Tempietto Longobardo at Cividale," in Pace, *L'VIII secolo*, 93–102.

[26] L'Orange points to another plaster torso that was found during the excavations as evidence that there may have been more female saints in stucco on the north and south walls. A fragment of a larger than life-size foot was also found. It is possible the foot belonged to the original decoration of the east wall of the

though this was destroyed when the roof of the chapel collapsed in an earthquake in the thirteenth century.[27]

In general terms, the *Tempietto's* decorative program transforms the space of the chapel into a Heavenly Jerusalem in microcosm. The donor inscription refers to *"[a]RCES IA[m] TEMPLO [beato]*," and in the middle register, the columns of fictive architecture behind the male saints are covered in jewels.[28] Playing off of the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21:19, other Late Antique and early medieval relic shrines and oratories also show saints standing in fictive, jewel-encrusted structures, such as those depicted in the fifth-century mosaics in the Rotunda of Hagios Georgios in Thessaloniki.[29]

The upper register also offers a vision of heaven. In his work on the stuccoes, L'Orange purposefully chose to refer to the floral friezes above and below the female saints as "stars" rather than "rosettes," because he saw the female saints primarily as intercessors in heaven, carrying the prayers of the believers to God, and the floral/stellar friezes signaled the celestial location where the procession takes place.[30] To support this interpretation, he compared the procession to the crowd of saints who offer up crowns on

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aula, which is now completely destroyed. L'Orange, *La scultura*, 23–24; Paolo Casadio, Teresa Perusini, and Piera Spadea, "Zur Stuckdekoration des 'Tempietto Longobardo' in Cividale: Technische und naturwissenschaftliche Untersuchungsergebnisse," in Exner, *Stuck des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, 38.

[27] The earthquake occurred in 1222–1223, but tesserae were found during the excavations. Torp, *L'Architettura,* 205.

[28] Mor reconstructed the text of the inscription as "*pe[rg]e via templo [domini]*." Either way, both scholars agree that the text refers to a temple. Mor, "La grande iscrizione," 118.

[29] Maria Cristina Carlie, *The Vision of the Palace of the Byzantine Emperors as a Heavenly Jerusalem* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2012), 92–100; Laura Nasrallah, "Empire and Apocalypse in Thessaloniki: Interpreting the Early Christian Rotunda," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13, no. 4 (2005): 465–508; Jean-Michel Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IV^e^ au VI^e^ siècle: Contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne,* Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 254 (Paris: De Boccard, 1984), 132–153.

[30] L'Orange, *La scultura,* 105.

the early ninth-century triumphal arch behind another arch that depicts the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Santa Prassede.[31] The female saints could also be compared to the early ninth-century San Zeno chapel, a funerary chapel for Pope Paschal I's (817–824) mother also in Santa Prassede, which shows female saints in aristocratic dress on one wall, processing forward with crowns in their hands [Fig. 49–50]. Moreover, pointing to the way the two innermost female saints at Cividale raise their hands in supplication, L'Orange suggested that the natural daylight provided by the window functioned as a representation of Christ as the *Lux Vera*, who received the prayers brought by the intercessory female saints.[32] He argued that the use of natural light to represent Christ was inspired by Revelation 21:23: "And the city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God has enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."[33]

The notion that the window in the west wall could represent Christ as the light of the Heavenly Jerusalem led Torp and L'Orange to formulate a coordinated argument for a programmatic relationship between the lunette fresco of Christ in the lower register and the window in the upper. Torp identified the iconography of the young, beardless Christ with long hair in the lunette as a representation of *Christus Lux*, an image type that he contended derived ultimately from portraits of late Roman emperors in the guise of Apollo-Sol.[34] Torp's suggestion that the iconography had associations with light allowed L'Orange to argue that the window expanded on the theme introduced in the lunette; the

[31] Rotraut Wisskirchen, *Die Mosaiken der Kirche Santa Prassede in Rom* (Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1992), 27–40; idem., *Das Mosaikprogramm von S. Prassede in Rom: Ikonographie und Ikonologie* (Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1990) 114–123; L'Orange, *La scultura,* 107–110.

[32] L'Orange, *La scultura,* 115–123.

[33] Ibid., 123.

[34] Torp, *L'Architettura,* 227.

program progresses from the painted representation of Christ as light in the lunette to the material realization of the theme in the window.

L'Orange's observations raise the question of what the central window on the west wall would have looked like in the eighth century. L'Orange suggested that it may have been enclosed by a pierced, internal framework made from stone, metal, or stucco. Windows in the baptistery in Albenga feature such openwork stone nets, consisting of medallions with crosses in their centers.[35] Internal metal frames formed from networks of arches with crosses also occur in Ravenna, and pierced plaster structures in the shape of crosses survive in Santa Sabina in Rome [Fig. 51].[36] If the window in Cividale had such an arrangement, then the representation of Christ would have been emblematic, communicated through the sign of the cross. On the other hand, the possibility that the window at Cividale had a figural representation of Christ rendered in stained glass must also be considered, since the earliest extant figurative stained glass window that depicts Christ dates to just after this period. A fragment of a stained glass representation of Christ was found in the excavations of the early ninth-century monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno [Fig. 52].[37] The fragment is tiny, only 19 cm tall, and identifies

[35] L'Orange, *La scultura,* 120.

[36] Ibid.; For descriptions of this kind of plaster grating used in churches in Rome, see the *Liber pontificalis'* Life of Leo III. "He also decorated this church's wondrously beautiful windows with the mineral gypsum." (*Necnon et fenestras ipsius aecclesiae mire pulcritudinis ex metallo gypsino decoravit*.) and "He decorated this church's windows with the mineral gypsum, and decorated other windows with glass of various colors" (*Necnon et fenestras ipsius ecclesiae ex metallo gypsino decoravit; et alias fenestras de vitro diversis coloribus decoravit*). *Liber Pontificalis*, 98.31, 98. 34, ed. L. Duchesne, vol. 2 of *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, introduction, et commentaire* (Paris: De Boccard, 1955), 10; trans. Raymond Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes* (Liber Pontificalis): *The Ancient Biographies of Nine Popes from AD 715 to AD 817* (Liverpool: Liverpoos University Press, 1992), 195–196.

[37] John Mitchell has identified what he calls a "positive mania for glass" at San Vincenzo al Voltruno, where an on-site workshop produced window glass, glass vessels, enamels, and beads for the monastery. The absence of any carved stone parapets at San Vincenzo, even led Mitchell to posit that the liturgical furniture at the monastery may have been constructed from leaded glass, rather than stone. In addition to the San Vincenzo al Volturno window, there may also be an even earlier example of a figurative stained

Christ by a cruciform halo and the *alpha* in the upper left corner of the arrangement.[38] The San Vincenzo al Volturno window will be discussed in greater detail below.

Of the two possibilities, it seems more probable that the Cividale window once held an openwork cross or crosses rather than a stained glass window. Not only were such structures more common in early medieval buildings, but an aspect of the donor inscription also opens up the possibility that the window might have held a corruscating "*crucis vexilla.*" Tavano observed that the phrase "*Christe fave votis*" in the *Tempietto's* inscription derives from a line in the introduction to Sedulius' fifth-century *Carmen paschale*, which was well known and quoted in Lombard epigraphy.[39] In Cividale, lines from Sedulius' poem also appear on a marble plaque on the cathedral's baptismal font, which was added to the font in the third quarter of the eighth century by Patriarch Sigiuald (*sed*. ca. 756–787) [Fig. 53].[40] Tavano speculated that Sigiuald may have even been the

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glass window from the monastery at Jarrow, though this example is more controversial. John Mitchell, "The Display of Script and the Uses of Painting in Longobard Italy," in Centro italiano, vol. 2 of *Testo e immagine*, 933–934; J. Moreland, "A Monastic Workshop and Glass Production at San Vincenzo al Volturno," in *San Vincenzo al Volturno: the Archaeology, Art, and Territory of an Early Medieval Monastery,* ed. Richard Hodges and John Mitchell (Oxford: British Archaeological Papers, 1985): 37–60; Dell'Acqua, *"Illuminando Colorat"*, 8–11, 32. Rosemary Cramp, "The Window Glass from the Monastic Site of Jarrow: Problems of Interpretation," *Journal of Glass Studies* 17 (1975): 91.

[38] Francesca Dell'Acqua. "The Christ from San Vincenzo al Volturno: Another Instance of 'Christ's Dazzling Face,'" in *Les panneaux de vitrail isolés; Actes du XXIVe Colloque International du Corpus Vitrearum Zurich 2008,* ed. Stefan Trümpler and Valérie Sauterel (Bern: Lang, 2010), 11–12.

[39] Christe, faue uotis, qui mundum in morte iacentem / Viuificare uolens quondam terrena petisti / Caelitus, humanam dignatus sumere formam, / Sic aliena gerens, ut nec tua linquere posses. Christ, incline to hear my prayers, you who consented to bring / The world, prostrate in death, back to life, and who once south out earth, / Coming down from heaven, and deigned to take on human form, / Assuming another's in such a way that you might not abandon your own. Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, 1.351–354, ed. Huemer, *CSEL* 10, 41; trans. Springer, *Sedulius*, 21; Sergio Tavano, "Note sul 'tempietto' di Cividale," *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 7 (1975): 85–87.

[40] Hoc Matthaeus agens hominem generaliter implet, / Marcus ut alta fremit uox per deserta leonis, / Iura sacerdotii Lucas tenet ore iuuenci, / More uolans aquilae uerbo petit astra Iohannes. Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, 1.355–358, ed. Huemer, *CSEL* 10, 41; see also Nicolette Gray, "The Paleography of Latin Inscriptions in the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Centuries in Italy," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 16 (1948): 72.

author of the verses in the *Tempietto*.[41] If the author of the donor inscription was familiar with Sedulius's *Carmen paschale*, then other aspects of the decorative program may have been inspired by the poem as well. In the conclusion to Book I, Sedulius described his entry into the heavenly fortress.

> I make my way more easily to the topmost citadel at last.
> Behold, the sacred standards gleaming with the sign of the cross.
> Behold, the shining camps of the holy king. The lordly trumpet blares.
> The city gates open to its soldiers. He who fights may enter.
> The eternal door calls you – Christ is that door.
> You will receive the golden reward of eternal life,
> You who bear the arms of the Lord with all courage,
> And his glory has been stamped on your forehead. Your glorious arms,
> Good king, I carry as I bring up the rear of your army.
> Grant me my own lodgings here, within the city walls,
> A little house, where I, your resident, may deserve
> To dwell in this holy place and, even though last
> To have my name written on the list as a citizen forever.[42]

The description of a heavenly city populated by soldiers calls to mind the soldier saints in the *Tempietto*. Moreover, the assertion that "Christ is that door," an image derived from John 10:9, resonates with the lunette fresco depicting Christ directly over the entrance to the chapel. If the window in the *Tempietto* was originally enclosed by an openwork structure in the shape of a cross, then this would suit Sedulius' exortation to "Behold, the sacred standards gleaming with the sign of the cross." Whatever the original appearance of the window in Cividale, the essential element in the composition was the light used to signify Christ as the source of illumination for the Heavenly City.

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[41] Tavano, *Il Tempietto Longobardo*, 83–84.

[42] Blandius ad summam tandem peruenimus arcem. / En signo sacrata crucis uexilla coruscant, / En regis pia castra micant, tuba clamat erilis, / Militibus sua porta patet: qui militat intret, / Ianua uos aeterna uocat, quae ianua Christus. / Aurea perpetuae capietis praemia uitae, / Arma quibus Domini tota uirtute geruntur / Et fixum est in fronte decus. / Decus arma que porto / Militiae que tuae, bone rex, pars ultima resto. / Hic proprias sedes, huius mihi moenibus urbis / Exiguam concede domum, tuus incola sanctis / Vt merear habitare locis albo que beati / Ordinis extremus conscribi in saecula ciuis. / Grandia posco quidem, sed tu dare grandia nosti, / Quem magis offendit quisquis sperando tepescit. Sedulius, *Carmen Paschale*, 1.335–348, ed. Huemer, *CSEL* 10, 40–41. trans. Springer, *Sedulius*, 21.

There is, then, a striking parallel between the west wall's lunette fresco in the middle register and the window in the upper. The parallel extends to the saints that flank the lunette and the window. In the middle register, male saints carry crowns and crosses, and in the upper, the female saints do the same. With the exception of the two innermost female saints, both male and female figures are portrayed facing iconically forward. Apart from the genders of the figures, the most noticeable difference between the registers is the medium employed, especially the way the different media situate figures in space. The male saints are rendered in fresco and stand in painted, architectural settings that recede into the fictive space behind the picture plane. Conversely, the female saints are modeled in stucco and project out into real space.

Material and technical similarities between fresco painting and stucco relief strengthen the visual comparison between the registers. Although fresco plaster and stucco plaster are rarely chemically identical, the recipes for both substances are based on the same essential ingredients: water, sand, and either lime ($CaCO_3$) or gypsum ($CaSO_4$).[43] Fresco and stucco are also technically alike in the preparatory phases of the work. Before a fresco may be painted or a stucco relief modeled, the underlying masonry of a wall must be dressed with a rough coat of plaster — known in later periods as the *arricio* — onto which an underdrawing is sketched. Examples of early medieval preparatory drawings for stucco sculptures have survived at the early ninth-century chapel of San Benedetto at Malles and in the late ninth-century *Westwerk* at Corvey,

[43] Palazzo-Bertholon, "Confronti tecnici," 286; For chemical analyses of the frescoes in Cividale see Aurora Cagnana et al., "Indagini archeometriche sui materiali da costruzione del 'tempietto' di Santa Maria in Valle di Cividale del Friuli: I parte: gli affreschi altomedievale," *Archeologia dell'architettura* 8 (2004): 69–87; idem. "Gli affreschi altomedievali del Tempietto di Cividale: Nuovi dati da recenti analisi di laboratorio," *Forum Iulii annuario del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale del Friuli* 27 (2004): 143–153.

which will be discussed in the next chapter [Fig. 54].[44] In the cathedral in Hildesheim, two tympana near the north and south entrances to the crypt also display ninth-century figural stucco reliefs with preparatory drawings.[45] The relationship between underdrawing and relief is particularly striking in the depiction of an enthroned figure of Christ in the south tympanum, where parts of Christ's torso have broken away and the underdrawing is visible in the areas of the losses [Fig. 55].

As mentioned in the Introduction, many art historians believe that the same craftsmen were responsible for both stucco relief and fresco painting at many early medieval sites. At the very least, frescoists and stucco workers each had to be aware of what the other was doing in order to coordinate their efforts. At Cividale, the frescoes in the middle register slightly overlap areas of coarse, unfinished stucco, suggesting that the artisans conceived of the stucco and the painting as a unit, finishing the stucco first and using the painting to cover up the rough edges of the stuccowork.[46] That the same artisans were responsible for both media in the *Tempietto* is likely.

Yet, fresco and stucco are not identical processes. In the case of fresco, the plaster that is applied on top of the initial base of rough plaster is spread in a smooth layer, which absorbs pigment while it is still wet. Unlike tempera or oil painting, which use egg and oil binders, in fresco there is no other binder involved in the process beyond the plaster itself. Color fuses directly to the plaster substrate. Vitruvius described the process in which colors were absorbed as follows:

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[44] Hans Nothdurfter, *St. Benedikt in Mals* (Lana: Tappeiner, 2002), 75–78; Hilde Claussen, "Karolingische Stuckfiguren im Corveyer Westwerk: Vorzeichnungen und Stuckfragmente," *Kunstchronik* 48, no. 11 (1995): 521–534.

[45] Michael Brandt and Oskar Emmenegger, "Frühmittelalterlicher Stuck im Hildesheimer Dom," in Exner, *Stuck des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, 74–75.

[46] L'Orange, *La scultura,* 27.

> When the colors are carefully laid upon the wet plaster, they do not fail but are permanently durable, because the lime has its moisture removed in the kilns, and becoming attenuated and porous, is compelled by its dryness to seize upon whatever happens to present itself.[47]

Vitruvius's account attributes an active quality to plaster, describing lime as a material that dynamically seizes elements from its surrounding environment. After being baked in a kiln, lime becomes dehydrated and, consequently, sucks up pigment like a sponge as it is applied to the wall.[48] Vitruvius continued his description of fresco painting by noting that after lime "gathers seeds or elements by mixture with other potencies, and becoming solid with whatever parts it is formed, it dries together so that it seems to have the qualities proper to its kind."[49] When a fresco dries, the absorbed colors form a homogenous, unified surface from heterogeneous ingredients. The final result is an effect of unity and durability.

Stucco modeling is the inverse of fresco painting. Where fresco creates images through a process of absorption and fusion, stucco images are formed through accretion and compilation**.** To create the female saints at Cividale, the sculpted forms were built up by successive layers of plaster held in place by stabilizing iron bars. Such details as garment folds and the floral friezes were modeled directly on the wall with a knife while

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[47] Colores autem, udo tectorio cum diligenter sunt inducti, ideo non remittunt sed sunt perpetuo permanentes, quod calx, in fornacibus excocto liquore facta raritatibus et evanida, ieiunitate coacta corripit in se quae res forte contigerunt. Vitruvius, *De arch.,* 7.3*,* ed. and trans. Frank Granger, *On Architecture, Volume II: Books 6-10,* Loeb Classical Library 280 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 92–93.

[48] In 2007, I was able to participate in a fresco painting course organized through the Studio Art Centers International in Florence. In applying pigment dissolved in water to wet plaster, it was possible to watch diluted pigment be absorbed into the surface of the painting. For this reason, modern-day frescoists speak about plaster being "thirsty."

[49] mixtionibusque ex aliis potestatibus conlatis seminibus seu principis una solidescendo, in quibuscumque membris est formata cum fit arida, redigitur, uti sui generis proprias videatur habere qualitates. Vitruvius, *De arch.,* 7.3*,* ed. and trans. Granger, *On Architecture*, 92–95.

the plaster was still wet.[50] The blue-green glass bottles in the floral friezes were pressed, neck-first, into the wet stucco before it had completely dried [Fig. 56].[51]

A slightly different working procedure was adopted for the frame around the central lunette. Instead of building up the forms directly on the wall, each stem, leaf, and cluster of grapes was cast separately in molds away from the wall. After hardening in the open air, the disparate components were then arranged and glued, piece-by-piece, into the space between the upper and lower boundaries of the arch, creating a striking, openwork composition.[52] As with the floral friezes above, blue-green glass vessels were inserted into the rosettes in the arch. The arch was constructed by gathering diverse elements and assembling them into a composite but coherent structure.

Therefore, the *Tempietto Longobardo's* decorative program relies on an eloquent contrast between stucco sculpture and fresco painting. The heterogeneous, assembled quality of the stucco is visually and tactilely distinct from the smooth, surface unity of the frescoes. Although the play between singular and variegated forms is appealing from a purely aesthetic perspective, the Gregory of Tours' Bazas miracle with which this chapter began provides a literary example where the trope is ascribed a greater theological significance. The juxtaposition of heterogeneous and homogeneous media in the *Tempietto Longobardo* is equally meaningful. However, before turning to the semantics of artistic techniques, it is necessary to address the problem of the site's controversial

[50] L'Orange, *La scultura,* 27–28.

[51] Ian Freestone and Francesca Dell'Acqua, "Early medieval glass from Brescia, Cividale and Salerno, Italy: composition and affinities," *Il vetro nell'Alto Medioevo; Atti delle VIII Giornate Nazionali del studio*, *Spoleto, 20–21 aprile 2002,* ed. Daniela Ferrari (Bologna: La Madragora, 2005), 65.

[52] L'Orange, *La scultura*, 28.

date to understand better the historical moment in which the chapel was made.[53]

Controversy over the Date

Following Cecchelli's work, which was first published in the 1920s and argued that the *Tempietto* dated to around 800, scholarly opinion has been divided between the late Lombard period in the third quarter of the eighth century and the early Carolingian period in the fourth quarter of the eighth century.[54] Although Torp and L'Orange made a strong case for a Lombard date in their authoritative monograph on the site, which was published in three volumes between 1977 and 1979, doubts still linger. As recently as 2002 an entry on the *Tempietto Longobardo* in the French exhibition catalogue, *Le Stuc*, preferred not to take a firm stance on the question, stating that the Lombard date was the most likely, but that the chapel could also be Carolingian.[55]

To many, the chronology matters because in 773/4 Charlemagne, prompted by Pope Hadrian, invaded and annexed north Italy, ending the Lombard kingdom in the

[53] Theories about Tempietto's date were particularly varied in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fernand de Dartein argued that the architecture was ancient Roman but the decoration eighth-century; Raffaele Cattaneo proposed a date after 1000 for the whole monument; and Giovanni Teresio Rivoira suggested the architecture was built during the eighth century, but the decorative program was added in the eleventh or twelfth. Fernand de Dartein, *Étude sur l'architecture lombarde et sur les origines de l'architecture romano-byzantine* (Paris: Dunod, 1865–1882), 30–34; Raffaele Cattaneo, *L'architettura in Italia dal secolo VI al Mille circa: ricerche storico-critiche* (Venice: Tipografia Emiliana, 1888), 93; Giovanni Teresio Rivoira, *Le origini dell'architettura lombarda e delle sue principali derivazioni nei paesi d'oltralpe* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1908), 108–111.

[54] Carlo Cecchelli, "L'oratorio delle monache longobarde (tempietto longobardo)," *Memorie Storiche Forogiuliesi* 16 (1920): 125–156; idem., "Arte barbarica cividalese," *Memorie Storiche Forogiuliesi* 17 (1921): 157–205.

[55] Renata Stradiotti, "Cividale: Chapelle lombarde," in Sapin, *Le Stuc*, 181–182; Generally speaking, scholars writing in German tend to advocate a Carolingian date, while Italian-speaking scholars prefer the Lombard date. I know of only one scholar writing in Italian who has argued for a Carolingian date, Carlo Bertelli, and his argument seems to be based primarily on connoisseurial instinct. Carlo Bertelli, "Traccia allo studio delle fondazioni medievali dell'arte italiana," in *Dal Medioevo al Quattrocento*, vol. 5 of *Storia dell'arte italiana* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1983), 89–91.

northern half of the Italian peninsula.[56] What is at stake in the debate is whether the chapel belongs to an indigenous, north Italian artistic tradition or to the early Carolingian *renovatio*.[57]

The Lombard vs. Carolingian problem ultimately stems from the belief that the appearance of art produced in north Italy must have fundamentally changed at the same time the political situation did in 774; but as Hans Belting cogently argued nearly fifty years ago, the art and architecture produced in north Italy during the second half of the eighth century demonstrates a high degree of continuity in all media between the end of the Lombard kingdom and the beginning of Carolingian control of the region.[58] Artistic workshops active before 774 did not vanish after Charlemagne was named "king of the Lombards." The same artisans who worked for Lombard patrons continued to receive commissions and train students during the Carolingian period.[59] Though the year may have historical and political significance, from an art historical perspective, 774 is an artificial dividing line. Instead of speaking of two separate artistic traditions in north

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[56] Though a sharp distinction is often made between the Lombards and Carolingians, the tendency to treat the two as if they were completely separate cultural groups before 774 is misleading. Even before the Carolingian take-over, members of the two groups interacted and intermarried. It could even be said that some members of the Carolingian and Lombard ruling elite were part of the same family. Constance Brittain Bouchard, "The Carolingian Creation of a Model of Patrilineage," in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 144–146.

[57] Hans Belting, "Probleme der Kunstgeschichte Italiens im Frühmittelalter," in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1 (1967): 94–95; Casadio, Perusini, and Spadea, "Zur Stuckdekoration," 37–40.

[58] Ibid.

[59] On the possibility that Lombard makers of *opus sectile* pavements and frescoists who worked on the palace of Arichis II in Salerno also worked on the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno after the Carolingian take-over, see John Mitchell, "Karl der Große, Rom, und das Vermächtnis der Langobarden," in vol. 3 of *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Große und Papst Leo* III, ed. Christoph Stiegemann and Matthias Wemhoff (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1999), 100–101. On the possibility that Lombard manuscript makers taught techniques to Carolingian manuscript makers, see Meyer Schapiro, review of *The Fresco Cycle of S. Maria di Castelseprio*, by Kurt Weitzmann, *The Art Bulletin* 34, no. 2 (1952): 162.

Italy — one Lombard, the other Carolingian — most scholars now agree that it is more accurate to view the late eighth century as one continuous tradition.[60]

Nonetheless, some scholars doubt a Lombard date for the *Tempietto* because the six stucco sculptures of female saints do not fit comfortably with established art historical ideas of what Lombard sculpture should look like. By and large, most Lombard sculpture resembles the carved panels on the Tegurium of Callistus, which were carved in Cividale shortly before the *Tempietto Longobardo* was made [Fig. 57].[61] The shallow, flat forms appear pressed up against an invisible barrier which restricts the depth of their projection. Closely contemporary with the Tegurium, the carvings on the Altar of Ratchis are similarly confined to a shallow degree of projection [Fig. 58].[62] The figures are flat, and an impulse to cover the entire surface of the altar guides the composition. The angels' improbably long arms and fingers stretch to span the surface area. Free-floating flowers and stars, which would have been filled with glass inlay, punctuate and fill the negative space around the figures.[63] These two formal properties, namely the restricted depth and the urge to cover a surface, are characteristic of stone carving in the period, as demonstrated by earlier examples from Lombard Pavia [Fig. 59].[64] Against this background, the chapel in Cividale, which was commissioned perhaps a decade after the

[60] Torp and L'Orange acknowledged this. Torp, *L'Architettura,* 146–147; L'Orange, *La scultura,* 193; see also Giovanni Lorenzoni, "Il tempietto di S. Maria in Valle di Cividale: è longobardo o carolingio? Rilevanza di un problema e una possibilità di soluzione," *Arte veneta: rivista di storia* 32 (1978): 4.

[61] Laura Chinellato, "Il battistero di Callisto, l'altare di Ratchis e i marmi del Museo Cristiano: Spunti per una rilettura," *Forum Iulii* 35 (2011): 61.

[62] Ibid., 60.

[63] For a reconstruction of the polychromy and glass inlay on the altar, see Laura Chinellato and Maria Teresa Costantini, "L'altare di Ratchis l'originaria finitura policroma: Prospetto frontale e posteriore," *Forum Iulii* 28 (2004): 133–156.

[64] For bibliography on this plaque see Saverio Lomartire, "Schrankenplatte mit Meerungeheuern" and "Schrankenplatte mit Pfauen," in Stiegemann and Wemhoff, vol. 1 of *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, 80–82.

Altar of Ratchis, appears to be an outlier. The fact that the stuccoes are deep, slightly over-life-size reliefs makes them extraordinary for late Lombard north Italy. Visually, the stuccoes seem to have more in common with antique stone statuary than they do with early medieval stone carving, and this is taken as proof that they must belong to a "renaissance" moment. Christian Beutler, for example, preferred the Carolingian date for the *Tempietto*, since he believed that the stucco-workers in Cividale must have relied on antique sculptures for models.[65] What Beutler perceived as the classical character of the *Tempietto's* saints only made sense to him in the context of the early Carolingian *renovatio*.

Yet, evidence does exist for other life-size figural reliefs in stucco from the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Two life-size Virgin and Child sculptures in stucco, currently held in the museum of the monastery of San Salvatore-Santa Giulia in Brescia, are sculpted almost completely in the round with their heads tilted forward like the female saints at Cividale [Fig. 60].[66] The Virgins' haloes are also three-dimensional, again like the saints' haloes in the Tempietto. Though the provenance of both sculptures is uncertain, it is possible that they came from a Benedictine abbey in Leno, founded by the Lombard king and queen, Desiderius (r. 756–774) and Ansa.[67]

In preparation for the museum exhibition, *Il futuro dei Longobardi*, which was held at the Santa Giulia-Museo della Città in Brescia in 2000, reeds inside one of the

[65] Christian Beutler, *Statua: Die Entstehung der nachantiken Statue und der europäische Individualismus* (Munich: Prestel, 1982), 203–205.

[66] Pier Fabio Panazza, "Vierge 'Théotokos,'" in Sapin, *Le Stuc*, 184–185.

[67] Maurizio Tagliapietra, "La Madonna in stucco conservata presso il museo della cittá in Santa Giulia a Brescia," in Sapin, *Stucs et décors*, 197.

sculptures were dated using carbon-14 analysis.[68] Medieval stucco sculptures frequently incorporate plant fibers, which helps the plaster dry faster and cohere better to itself, allowing sculptors to achieve deeper reliefs.[69] Originally, the Virgin relief was thought to be Romanesque, but the carbon-14 analysis placed it between the second half of the eighth century and the first half of the ninth century.[70] The new date raised the possibility that the relief may have been linked to the founding of the abbey in Leno in the eighth century. With carbon-14 dating, though, any year within the chronological parameters provided by the test must be considered equally likely. While the sculpture may be eighth-century, an early ninth century date is also possible. Nonetheless, both stucco Virgins in Brescia are now considered to be early medieval, and the fact that they could be reclaimed for the early Middle Ages instead of the Romanesque period, suggests that the deep sculptural reliefs depicting human figures may have been more widespread in the early Middle Ages than is commonly believed.

Another obstacle to ascribing a definitive date to the *Tempietto Longobardo* has been the lack of reliable textual sources. The *Tempietto's* donor inscription is the earliest written evidence related to the foundation of the chapel, but the absence of specific names in the poem has meant that it cannot be used to date the monument definitively. Paleographical analyses of the inscription have proved inconclusive.[71] In the absence of

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[68] Ibid.; Carlo Bertelli and Gian-Pietro Brogiolo (ed.), *Il futuro dei Longobardi: l'Italia e la costruzione dell'Europa di Carlo Magno* (Milan: Skira, 2000).

[69] Palazzo-Berthelon, "Confronti tecnici," 286.

[70] Tagliapietra, "La Madonna," 197n2.

[71] C.G. Mor argued on paleographic grounds that the inscription was written between 758 and 770. Pietro Rugo suggested slightly broader paleographic parameters, placing it between another painted inscription in the church of San Salvatore in Brescia, which he believed dated to the 750s, and the Bamberg Cassiodorus (Staatsbibliothek Bamberg Msc. Patr. 61), which was written at Montecassino during the fourth quarter of the eighth century. However, paleographic arguments suffer from the same problem that arguments based on artistic style do, namely the fact that the perceptible differences between the late Lombard and early

reliable historical documentation from the eighth century, art historical comparisons with other monuments offer the most convincing reasons to place the chapel in the late Lombard period. The most recent research on a closely related sister monument, the church of San Salvatore in Brescia, has placed it in the third quarter of the eighth century; comparions with this monument provide a compelling reason to believe that the *Tempietto Longobardo* is also Lombard.

The basilica of San Salvatore in Brescia was part of a convent complex, founded in the mid-eighth century by Desiderius and Ansa, the same royal couple who founded the monastery in Leno where the stucco Virgin and Child reliefs may have originated.[72] In Brescia, the basilica's interior decoration integrates stucco relief, fresco, and glass. The program consists of narrative paintings, depicting hagiographical and biblical subjects, arranged grid-like in rectangular frames on the nave walls.[73] The nave's arcades are lined in ornamental bands of stucco relief, which closely resemble the arches in the *Tempietto Longobardo*, especially in the use of five-petaled rosettes with blue-green glass bulbs at the centers [Fig. 61–62].[74] At both Brescia and Cividale, the rosettes were formed by pressing glass bottles, neck-first, into the wet stucco before it had completely dried. The visual and technical similarities between the sites led L'Orange to posit that

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Carolingian periods in Italy can be slight. Mor, "La grande iscrizione," 117; Pietro Rugo, "Epigrafia altomedieoevale in Friuli," in *Aquileia e le Venezie nell'alto medioevo; Atti della XVIII Settimana di studi aquileiesi, 30 aprile – 5 maggio 1987,* ed. Centro di antichità altoadriatiche (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1988), 395.

[72] Suzanne Wemple, "S. Salvatore/S.Giulia: A Case Study of the Endowment and Patronage of a Major Female Monastery in Northern Italy," in *Women and the Medieval World: Essays in Honor of John H. Mundy,* ed. Julian Kirshner and Suzanne Wemple (New York: Blackwell, 1985), 86; Gian Pietro Brogiolo, "Desiderio e Ansa a Brescia: dalla fondazione del monastero al mito," in Bertelli and Brogiolo, *Il futuro dei Longobardi*, 143–155.

[73] For a recent overview of the frescoes with bibliography, see John Mitchell, "The Painted Decoration of San Salvatore in Brescia in Context," in Brogiolo and Morandini, *Dalla corte regia*, 169–170.

[74] L'Orange, *La scultura*, 38–41.

the same craftsmen worked at both.[75] However, more recently, Bea Leal has noted that while the two monuments are related, slight variations in the chemical compositions of the stuccoes at Brescia and Cividale might indicate that different groups of craftsmen were involved.[76] Ian Freestone and Francesca dell'Acqua have also performed chemical analyses on the glass *ampullae* at Brescia and Cividale to determine whether or not the same workshop produced the glass at both sites.[77] They found that, with the exception of one vessel at Brescia, the tested *ampullae* were close enough compositionally that the raw materials could have come from a single source.[78] San Salvatore and the *Tempietto Longobardo* are certainly closely contemporary, and if the decorative program in San Salvatore could be firmly dated, then a case could be made for the *Tempietto*'s date as well.[79]

In the past, the date of San Salvatore's program was just as controversial as the *Tempietto*'s, with scholarly opinions divided between the late Lombard and early Carolingian periods. The debate stemmed from the fact that, although the convent was founded in the 750s, the basilica itself was built in stages over time. The church has at least two early medieval phases, San Salvatore I and San Salvatore II, and archaeological excavations of the site were only been able to establish a relative chronology for these

[75] Ibid., 41.

[76] Leal, "Stuccoes of San Salvatore," 228.

[77] Freestone and Dell'Acqua, "Early medieval glass," 65.

[78] However, these findings do not necessarily mean that the same workshop fashioned the glass at the sites, since raw glass may have been imported in blocks from the Levant or Egypt and then melted down and fashioned in Italy. In other words, the raw glass probably came from the same place, but it could have been made into ampullae by different people at different secondary sites of production. It is also possible that the ampullae-makers used recycled, Roman glass. Ibid., 68; see also Francesca dell'Acqua, "Nota sui reperti vitrei del monastero di San Vincenzo al Volturno e della Cappella Palatina di Arechi II a Salerno," *Rassegna storica salernitana n.s.* 14, no. 27 (1997): 254.

[79] Adriano Peroni, "San Salvatore in Brescia*:* un ciclo pittorico altomedievale rivisitato" *Arte medievale* 1 (1983): 53–80.

phases, not an absolute one.[80] Though it was possible to determine that certain construction campaigns are older or younger than others, the final date of all the phases remained unsettled. To complicate matters further, it was also unclear whether the frescoes and stucco arches in San Salvatore were contemporary with the architecture or if they belonged to a later decorative campaign. Even if the architecture of San Salvatore II dated to the Lombard period, the interior decoration could have been Carolingian.[81]

[80] When Gaetano Panazza excavated in the late 1950s, he initially attributed San Salvatore I to the early eighth century during Liutprand's reign and San Salvatore II to the mid-eighth century under Desiderius and Ansa. He later changed his opinion after he learned of a Carolingian diploma from 814 that refers to San Salvatore as a "*monasterium novum,*" which suggested to him that the monastery had been rebuilt in the early-ninth century, though Barbara Anderson has cast doubt on this interpretation of the phrase "*monasterium novum*." Panazza also cited a fragmentary painted inscription in San Salvatore's nave, which may read: "…*REGNANTEM DESIDERIUM THIRO HLU*." The "HLU" may refer to one of two Carolingian kings, Louis the Pious (r. 814–837) or Louis II (r. 849–875), whom the text supposedly aligns with the Lombard founder, Desiderius. Whether "HLU" actually refers to a Carolingian "Hludovicius" is debatable, given the illegibility of the end of the inscription, and the inscription is identified as Lombard just as often as Carolingian. Panazza, however, believed the inscription to be Carolingian, and in his modified chronology of the site, he ascribed San Salvatore I to a Lombard date of 754 and San Salvatore II to a Carolingian date of 814–816. The ease with which Panazza revised his archaeological argument to fit his interpretation of the historical evidence demonstrates that the stratigraphy at San Salvatore only allows for a relative chronology. Gaetano Panazza, "Lo scoperte in S. Salvatore a Brescia," *Arte Lombarda* 6 (1960): 13–21; idem., "Gli scavi, l'architettura, e gli affreschi della chiesa di S. Salvatore in Brescia," in *La Chiesa di San Salvatore in Brescia*, vol. 2 of *Atti dell'Ottavo Congresso di Studi sull'Arte dell'Alto Medioevo,* Congresso di studi sull'arte dell'alto Medioevo 8 (Milan: Ceschina, 1962), 185–186; Barbara Bernhard Anderson, "The Frescoes of San Salvatore at Brescia" (PhD diss., University of California Berkeley, 1976), 13–14, ProQuest (AAT 7704360). On the inscription see: Mitchell, "Display of Script," 894; Flavia De Rubeis, "La scrittura epigrafica in età longobarda," in Bertelli and Brogiolo, *Il futuro dei Longobardi*, 73; idem., "Desiderio Re, la Regina Ansa, e l'epigrafe dedicatoria di San Salvatore a Brescia," in Brogiolo and Morandini, *Dalla corte regia*, 95. On the methodological flaws inherent in interpreting archaeological evidence in light of historical texts, see Michael Kulikowski, "Drawing a Line under Antiquity: Archaeological and Historical Categories of Evidence in the Transition from the Ancient World to the Middle Ages," in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 171–184.

[81] Gian-Pietro Brogiolo, "La sequenza altomedievale della cripta di San Salvatore in Brescia," in *Wandmalerei des frühen Mittelalters: Bestand, Maltechnik, Konservierung; eine Tagung des Deutschen Nationalkomitees von ICOMOS in Zusammenarbeit mit der Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten in Hessen. Lorsch 10.–12. Oktober 1996*, ed. Matthias Exner (Munich, Lipp: 1998), 35; idem., "La nuova architettonica e il problema degli affreschi del San Salvatore di Brescia" in *Arte d'Occidente: temi e metodi. Studi in onore di Angiola Maria Romanini*, ed. Antonio Cadei (Rome: Edizioni Sintesi Informazione 1999), 25–34.

Recent technical analyses undertaken in 2009–2010 by a team of researchers led by Gian-Pietro Brogiolo have now resolved many aspects of the debate.[82] In particular, Vincenzo Gheroldi proved that the frescoes and stuccoes in San Salvatore's nave are in phase with the architectural fabric of San Salvatore II. He demonstrated that the iron pegs used to attach the stucco reliefs to the arcades were inserted into the wall while the mortar was still wet.[83] He further proved that the narrative frescoes on the walls were finished first, then the stucco reliefs on the arcades, and finally the clipeate portraits in fresco on the spandrels of the arcades.[84] In other words, there was no significant gap between the construction of the building and the addition of the decorative program; the architecture, the paintings, and the stucco reliefs all date to the same campaign.

Brogiolo's team was also able to take samples of reeds from the stuccoes on several different arches. The samples were sent to two separate laboratories at the Università di Lecce and Oxford, which used carbon-14 analysis to date them.[85] The analyses resulted in a calibrated date of 755 ± 15, meaning that the latest likely date for the program in Brescia is 770.[86] Given the striking similarities in motifs and techniques used in Brescia and Cividale, a late Lombard date for the *Tempietto* is also convincing.

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[82] Gian-Pietro Brogiolo, et al., "Ulteriori Ricerche sul San Salvatore II di Brescia," *Hortus artium medievalium* 16 (2010): 219–242; Gian-Pietro Brogiolo, "Archeologia e architettura delle due chiese di San Salvatore," in Brogiolo and Morandini, *Dalla corte regia,* 35–88.

[83] Vincenzo Gheroldi, "Evidenze tecniche e rapporti stratigrafici per la cronologia del sistema decorativo della basilica di San Salvatore II," in Brogiolo and Morandini, *Dalla corte regia,* 100–102.

[84] Brogiolo, et al. "Ulteriori Ricerche," 214–215; Gheroldi, "Evidenze techniche e rapporti stratigrafici," 106–107.

[85] Brogiolo, "Archeologia e architettura," 77–78.

[86] Ibid.

The *Auctores* of the Chapel

Even without the benefit of the recent analyses from Brescia, Torp and L'Orange argued that the *Tempietto Longobardo* dated to the 750s or 760s. They suggested that the donors could have either been the royal couple, Aistulf (r. 749–756) and Giseltrude or their successors, Desiderius and Ansa.[87] In a more recent 2006 publication, Torp favored the earlier date.[88]

The Lombard kingdom in Italy lasted from 568 until the Carolingian takeover in 774. By the mid-eighth century, the kingdom consisted of roughly thirty-five separate dukedoms. In north Italy (*Langobardia major*) these dukedoms were loosely united under the control of a king who resided in the capital of Pavia. Conversely, two large dukedoms in south Italy (*Langobardia minor*), based out of the cities of Spoleto and Benevento, often operated more independently from Pavia.

The possible patrons of the *Tempietto*, Aistulf and Giseltrude, were the duke and duchess of Friuli, based in Cividale, before becoming king and queen in 749. The historical background to how Aistulf became king requires a brief explanation. After the death of King Liutprand in 744, his nephew, Hildebrand was expected to succeed; however, a coup led by Ratchis, Aistulf's brother, who was the duke of Friuli from 737 to 744, put Ratchis on the throne instead of Hildebrand.[89] Aistulf assumed the title of duke of Friuli after Ratchis became king. However, in 749, Aistulf in turn forced Ratchis to abdicate and retire as a monk to Montecassino.[90]

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[87] Torp, *L'Architettura,* 139–142; L'Orange, *La scultura*, 127.

[88] Torp, *La capella palatina,* 8.

[89] Neil Christie, *From Constantine to Charlemagne: An Archaeology of Italy, AD 300–800* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 48–49.

[90] Ibid.

As king, Aistulf pursued an aggressive military policy, conquering significant portions of Byzantine territory on the Italian peninsula, including Ravenna in 751, and threatening to attack the city of Rome on more than one occassion. His military campaigns continued until his unexpected death in a hunting accident in 756.[91] The fact that Aistulf and Giseltrude came from Cividale and other members of the ducal family of Friuli had previously commissioned monuments in the city (see, for example, the Altar of Ratchis), makes Torp's hypothesis that Aistulf and Giseltrude were the "*pios auctores*" mentioned in the *Tempietto's* inscription plausible.

Given that the *Tempietto* was probably both a shrine for relics and an oratory, it is necessary to ask where Aistulf and Giseltrude acquired the relics for their chapel. Unlike nearby Aquileia, which could assert apostolic authority through St. Mark's disciples, Hermagoras and Fortunatus, Cividale boasted no famous Early Christian martyrs or saints.[92] The *Tempietto Longobardo*'s relics had to have been imported from elsewhere. Indeed, the practice of moving relics long distances to new chapels in new locations increased in the seventh century. Gillian Mackie has even suggested that the term "*martyrium* should be reserved for these secondary shrines, built specifically for the veneration of relics of one or many saints in a place that was previously unconnected to the cult."[93] She has pointed to the San Venanzio Chapel in the Lateran as the

[91] Ibid. The Roman *Liber Pontificalis* attributes Aistulf's death to an an act of God: "Meanwhile the wretched Aistulf while out hunting somewhere, was struck by a divine blow and died" (*Dum ergo haec agerentur, ipse infelix Aistulfus quodam loco in venatione pergens, divino ictu percussus defunctus est*). *Liber Pontificalis*, 94.48, ed. Duchesne, vol. 1 of *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 454; trans. Davis, *Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, 73.

[92] Marco Sannazaro, "Sviluppo dell'organizzazione ecclesiastica in Friuli dale origini all'età carolingia," in Lusuardi Siena, *Cividale Longobarda,* 11–13.

[93] The conventional practice was to send contact relics and to keep the body of the saint intact, as much as possible, at the site of his or her original martyrdom or burial. Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels*, 213; see also Alan Thacker, "Martyr Cult Within the Walls: Saints and Relics in the Roman *Tituli* Churches of the

prototypical example of the rising seventh-century trend of importing relics and building monumental settings in new locations to house them. In the case of S. Venanzio, the chapel was built for the bodies of martyrs (or perhaps only their contact relics) rescued from Dalmatia after the Avars took over the region.[94] The main apse in S. Venanzio displays a bust-length representation of Christ flanked by archangels against a backdrop of clouds and above a row of saints between the two bejeweled cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. In this way, the chapel followed the widespread convention adopted by other relic shrines of depicting the saints in heavenly settings. Mackie argued further that the individual portraits of the saints in S. Venanzio were based on portrait types taken from shrines in Dalmatia. In other words, the decoration of S. Venanzio displayed the origins of the relics it housed by visually invoking the decoration in the original shrines from which the relics came.[95]

It is possible that the relics in the *Tempietto Longobardo* were taken from Rome and that the decorative program of the chapel also declared their origins. The Roman *Liber Pontificalis'* life of Stephen II, who was pope from 752 to 757, records how Aistulf set siege to Rome for three months and absconded with relics from the local cemeteries.[96]

> Everything outside the city this pestilential Aistulf devastated with fire and sword, and thoroughly wrecked and consumed it, pressing mightily on so that he could capture the city of Rome. He even dug up the sacred cemeteries of the saints and stole many of their bodies, which was greatly to his soul's detriment.[97]

Fourth to Seventh Centuries," in *Text, Image, Interpretations: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context*, ed. Alistair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Breols, 2007), 31–70; Julia Smith, "Care of Relics in Early Medieval Rome," in *Rome and Religion in the Medieval World: Studies in Honor of Thomas F.X. Noble*, ed. Valerie L. Garver and Owen M. Phelan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 179–204.

[94] Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels*, 212–214.

[95] Ibid., 222–223.

[96] Torp, *La capella palatina*, 14.

[97] Omnia extra urbem ferro et igne devastans atque funditus demoliens consumsit, imminens vehementius hisdem pestifer Aistulfus ut hanc Romanam capere potuisset urbem. Nam et multa corpora sanctorum,

The anonymous *Chronicon Salernitanum* also describes how Aistulf took holy bodies from Rome to Pavia where he built "*oracula*" to house them.[98] Aistulf would not have been the first Lombard ruler who looked to Rome for relics to fill a church or chapel. The early seventh-century queen, Theodelinda (ca. 570–628), received a number of relics and liturgical objects from Pope Gregory the Great in 603, which she used to start a treasury for a church dedicated to John the Baptist in Monza.[99] Moreover, the two extant lunette frescoes on the west and north walls may deliberately allude to two Roman panel paintings, the Lateran *acheropsita* (using the spelling provided in the *Liber pontificalis*) and the *Salus Populi Romani* icon in Santa Maria Maggiore. Like the S. Venanzio chapel, the *Tempietto's* decorative program may have declared the origins of the building's contents by visually alluding to the two best known Christian cult images in Rome in the eighth century.

The Lateran *acheropsita* is first mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis'* life of Stephen II.[100] The passage records how early in Aistulf's reign, he reneged on a peace treaty and threatened to attack Rome; in response, the pope staged an elaborate public procession to ask for divine assistance.

> On a certain day with great humility he [Pope Stephen II] held a procession and litany in the usual way with the holy image of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ called the *acheropsita*, and along with it he brought forth various other

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effodiens eorum sacra cymiteria, ad magnum anime sue detrimentum abstulit. *Liber Pontificalis*, 94.41, ed. Duchesne, vol. 1 of *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 451–452; trans. Davis, *Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, 69–70.

[98] Aystulfus rex, de quo promisimus, regnavit annos 7, menses 5, fuit audax et ferox, et ablata multa sanctorum corpora ex Romanis finibus, in Papiam construxit eorum oracula; ubi et monasterium virginum et suas filias dedicavit. *Chronicon Salernitanum*, 7.12-14, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH SS* 3 (Hannover: 1839), 475; Torp, *La capella palatina*, 14.

[99] Hahn, "The Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries," 10.

[100] Thomas Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 127–129.

> sacred religious objects. With the rest of the *sacerdotes* the holy pope bore that holy image on his own shoulder, and both he and the entire people processed barefoot into God's holy mother's church called *ad praesepe.* Ash was placed on the heads of all the people, and they made their way with great wailing and besought the most merciful Lord our God. They attached and fixed to our Lord God's adorable cross the actual treaty, which the unspeakable king of the Lombards had torn to pieces.[101]

Today, the Lateran *acheropsita* is badly deteriorated and almost unintelligible, but later copies, such as one from Tivoli, provide some sense of what it originally looked like [Fig. 63–64]. The Cividale Christ is not a perfect replica of the Lateran panel, but the strict frontality of the pose and the combination of one hand raised in either a blessing or speaking gesture while the other holds a book is reminiscent of the Roman image. The shared compositional elements allow for an association to be drawn between the Cividale fresco and the famous cult image.[102]

The *Salus Populi Romani* icon in Santa Maria Maggiore was the counterpart to the Lateran Savior, and the depiction of the Virgin with the Christ child in the *Tempietto*'s north lunette may be loosely based on this image. The fifth-century panel painting depicts the Virgin facing forward and carrying the Christ child on her left side with her hands crossed over his lap [Fig. 65].[103] The Christ child holds a book in his left arm and raises his right hand in a speaking gesture. Though the fresco in the north

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[101] In una vero dierum cum multa humilitate solite procedens in letania cum sacratissima imagine domini Dei et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi, quae acheropsita nuncupatur, simulque et cum ea alia diversa sacra mysteria eiciens, proprio umero ipsam sanctam imaginem cum reliquis sacerdotibus hisdem sanctissimus papa gestans, nudisque pedibus tam ipse quamque universa plebs incedentes, in ecclesia sanctae Dei genetricis, quae ad Praesepem nuncupatur, posita in omnium capitibus populorum cinere, cum maximo ululatu pergentes, misericordissimum dominum Deum nostrum depraecati sunt; alligans connectensque adorande cruci domini Dei nostri pactum scilicet illum quem nefandus rex Langobardorum disruperat. *Liber Pontificalis*, 94.11, ed. Duchesne, vol. 1 of *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 443; trans. Davis, *Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, 57.

[102] Herbert L. Kessler, "Copia," in *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale* 5 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana 1994), 264–277.

[103] Gerhard Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani: Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter* (Weinheim: Acta humaniora, 1990), 13.

lunette at Cividale is fragmentary, the composition follows the general format of the Roman image, though Christ carries a scroll not a book [Fig. 66].[104] The *Salus Populi Romani* painting and the Lateran *acheropsita* were connected by the fact that the paintings were the two protagonists of the annual August 15 Assumption procession from the Lateran to Santa Maria Maggiore.[105] The procession, which is first attested to in the eighth century, would have made both images well-known in Rome.[106]

The south lunette in the *Tempietto Longobardo* is completely destroyed, and so what subject originally occupied this space is a matter of speculation. Torp suggested that the lunette initially contained a representation of John the Baptist, since such a composition would create an expanded Deesis with the Savior and Virgin lunettes.[107] The south side of the chapel also faces the basilica of San Giovanni (probably also the Baptist), meaning that a fresco depicting the Baptist would have been an appropriate subject for this wall.[108] If the south lunette depicted John, it could strengthen the chapel's connection to the Lateran, which had strong associations with both John the Baptist and John the Evangelist from at least the fifth century when Pope Hilary (461–468) added three oratories to the Lateran, one dedicated to the Baptist, another to the Evangelist, and a third to the Cross.[109] However, there are problems with the theory that

[104] There are, however, other famous variations on this theme from Rome in which the Christ child holds a scroll, like the early seventh century panel painting from Santa Maria ad Martyres (the Pantheon).

[105] Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 60–61.

[106] Ibid., 37.

[107] Torp, *L'Architettura,* 224.

[108] By the thirteenth century, the dedication had expanded to include both John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. This dual dedication is attested to in an inscription from 1242, following repairs made to the church under Abbess Gisela de Pertica. Torp, *L'Architettura,* 224.

[109] Jeffery Hamburger, *St. John the Divine: the Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 65; Herbert Kessler has also suggested that the Lateran Savior was originally a triptych that created a Deesis with the Virgin and John the Evangelist in the wings.

the south lunette depicted the Baptist. The lunettes on the west and north walls have parallel compositions with a central figure flanked by angels, but no similar early medieval images exist that depict John flanked by angels in this way. If the south lunette did depict the Baptist, it would not have matched the compositions of the other two lunettes. Ultimately, what subject was originally represented in the south lunette in Cividale must remain an open question.

In relating the fresco of Christ in the west lunette at Cividale to the miraculous Lateran icon, the fresco's associations with light, which Torp noted, are maintained.[110] Herbert Kessler has argued that the notion of Christ's radiant face was entangled with how medieval image theorists thought about images "not-made-by-hand." Kessler observed that one component of the origin myth behind the Holy Face of Edessa, another miraculous image "not-made-by-hand," is that Christ's face was so radiant that the painter (or scribe) who had been sent to paint (or write about) him on behalf of King Abgar of Edessa could not see him clearly enough to create an accurate portrait.[111] To compensate, Christ pressed his wet face into a towel, leaving an imprint of his visage on the cloth and gave it to the portraitist to take to Abgar. The copy of Christ's likeness was, therefore, not made by a human artist but by an indexical relationship to the archetype.[112] The creation of the miraculous image was necessitated by the brilliance of Christ's face,

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Herbert L. Kessler, "The Acheropita Triptych in Tivoli," in *Immagine e Ideologia: Studi in onore di Arturo Carlo Quintavalle,* ed. Arturo Calzona, Roberto Campari, and Massimo Mussini (Milan: Electa, 2007), 118.

[110] Herbert L. Kessler, "Christ's Dazzling Dark Face," in *Intorno al Sacro Volto: Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI–XIV)*, ed. Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, Colette Dufour Bozzo, and Gerhard Wolf (Venice: Marsilio, 2007), 233–234.

[111] Herbert L. Kessler, "Configuring the Invisible by Copying the Holy Face," in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation; Papers from a Colloquium held at the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome and the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1996,* ed. Herbert L. Kessler and Gerhard Wolf (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1998), 135; Kessler, "Dazzling Dark Face," 231.

[112] Kessler, "Configuring the Invisible," 134–135.

an aspect of his divinity, which obscured his human appearance. As a result, many copies of miraculous images "not-made-by-hand" often make some reference to Christ as light as a way of reminding viewers of his dual nature. This includes copies of the Lateran Savior, like the Tivoli version, where Christ holds an open book that paraphrases John 8:12, "I am the light of the world."[113] Earlier renditions of the Lateran Savior also incorporate allusions to light. For example, the early ninth-century Homilies of St. Gregory from Nonantola (Vercelli, Bibl. Capit. 148) portray Christ enthroned, with his hand raised and a book with the word "lux" inscribed in his halo, while a similar miniature in an early ninth-century evangeliary in Stuttgart (Stuttgart, Württemb. Landesbibl. II, 40) bears the Greek inscription, *phos-zoe* (light-life) on the book Christ holds.[114]

Therefore, in relating the Cividale Christ to the miraculous Lateran icon, the fresco's retains its associations with light.[115] It is not necessary to look to Late Antique portraits of emperors in the guise of Apollo-Sol, as Torp did, to connect the iconography thematically to light and illumination. The Lateran *acheropsita* offers a much closer model, both compositionally and conceptually. Similarly, while Torp thought that the north lunette fresco was a conscious evocation of a lost icon of the Virgin Hodegetria that served as the imperial *pallium* of Constantinople, it is not necessary to look all the way to

[113] Kessler, "Dazzling Dark Face," 231. Unlike the Holy Face of Edessa which was made through a process of imprinting, the Lateran image was thought to have been begun by St. Luke but finished by an angel; nonetheless, copies of the image still cite Christ's radiance as a way of alluding to his divine nature.

[114] Belting also compared these images to the Godescalc Evangelistary's portrait of Christ, though this image has no inscription explictly associating it with light. Torp, *La cappella palatina*, 16–17; Belting, "Probleme der Kunstgeschichte," 108.

[115] Kessler, "Dazzling Dark Face," 233–234.

Byzantium for models for the image of the Virgin in the *Tempietto*.[116] The Roman *Salus Populi Romani* icon offers a closer source.

The fact that the west lunette alludes to the Lateran Savior opens up the possibility that the chapel's makers were interested in using monumental commissions as a way of entering into contemporary debates about images in the eighth century, since the Lateran painting's status as a miraculous image "not-made-by-hand" may be tied to these debates. The earliest textual reference to the Lateran image is the *Liber pontificalis* passage about Aistulf attacking Rome, cited above. However, Nino Zchomelidse has pointed out that the Lateran *acheropsita* is likely a sixth-century panel, painted in Rome.[117] This means that there was a two-century-long gap between the image's production and the earliest historical record of its existence.[118] Zchomelidse proposed that what triggered the first mention of the *acheropsita* in the eighth century was the need to cast the image as a *pallium* to protect the city from the military threat posed by the Lombards.[119] By explicitly identifying the Lateran panel as a miraculous image, it tapped into the authority of earlier Eastern images used for the same protective purpose.

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[116] Hjalmar Torp, "Una Vergine *Hodighitria* del periodo iconoclastico nel 'Tempietto Longobardo' di Cividale," in *Studi in Onore di Angiola Maria Romanini*, ed. Anotonio Cadei, Marina Righetti Tosti-Corce, Anna Segagni Malacart, and Alessandro Tomei (Rome: Sintesi Informazione, 1999), 583–599. Bissera Pentcheva has cast doubt on whether such an imperial icon of the Virgin existed in Byzantium before Iconoclasm. If this icon did not exist at the time of the *Tempietto's* construction, then it could undermine Torp's claim further. Bissera Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 59.

[117] Nino Zchomelidse, "The Aura of the Numinous and its Reproduction: Medieval Paintings of the Savior in Rome and Latium," *Memoirs of the American Academy in* Rome 55 (2010): 223.

[118] Zchomelidse has implied that the reason there is no mention of the Lateran panel before the eighth century is because the image was such a familiar presence in the city that local writers did not comment on it, much like the later processions in in Constantinople that culminated in the "usual miracle." In the Constantinoplitan example, the only recorded accounts of the "usual miracle" were written by foreign visitors for whom the sight was new and exciting; for the locals it was a commonplace occurrence and not something they thought to record. Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, "Servants of the Holy Icon," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. Christopher Moss and Katherine Kiefer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 548.

[119] Zchomelidse, "The Aura of the Numinous," 225.

However, labeling the Lateran panel an "*acheropsita*" likely accomplished multiple things at once. It is also significant that the first mention of a Western image "not-made-by-hand" occurs in the middle of the eighth century during Byzantine Iconoclasm when the capacity of images to depict God, even an incarnate god, was being debated in the East.[120] Introducing a new, Western *acheropsita* in the middle of the eighth century could have served to set Rome apart from contemporary Byzantium. As Thomas Noble has demonstrated, in the last quarter of the seventh century, the Lateran began to make a conscious effort to cut ties with Byzantium, secure political autonomy for its landholdings in Italy, and form an independent political state, what Noble termed the "Republic of St. Peter."[121] The emergence of the miraculous Roman *acheropsita* in the middle of the eighth century could have been a further attempt on the part of Rome to define itself against and assert its own orthodoxy as superior to Byzantium's.[122]

The fact that the west lunette at Cividale seems to be patterned after the Lateran image may indicate that the chapel's Lombard makers were informed about the image's newfound importance in Rome in the mid-eighth century. Evidence from other monuments suggests that Lombard patrons and makers of art were aware of the image debates in the East in the eighth and ninth centuries, even if there are no surviving written treatises to testify to Lombard interest in the problem. The next section will consider two instances of Lombard monuments that respond to Byzantine Iconoclasm — Liutprand's church of St. Anastasius in Corteolona and the crypt of Epiphanius in San Vincenzo al

[120] Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 176–188.

[121] Thomas Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1984), xxi.

[122] Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians*, 127.

Volturno — and argue that the decorative program in the *Tempietto* also represents an attempt to enter into the conversation about the capacity of images to represent Christ's dual nature.

Image Theory and Lombard Art

The *Liber pontificalis'* description of Aistulf looting Rome's cemeteries for holy bodies calls to mind another instance of a Lombard ruler taking things from Rome to construct monuments in a north Italian city. Earlier in the eighth century, Liutprand took building materials from the city to furnish the monastery church of St. Anastasius in Corteolona, just outside of Pavia. The monastery was part of a larger palace complex, which Liutprand built sometime after 729.[123] Though the church and palace in Corteolona are now destroyed, two inscriptions are preserved in a later sylloge collection that describe the commission.[124] The first inscription reads:

> Behold the house of the Lord, built with beautiful materials, it shines forth and glistens, decorated with various metals. Rome, the capital of the faith, has given it its precious marble, mosaics, and columns, how these give light to the eyes of the world! Hooray for prince Liutprand, the author of this holy work! Your deeds will proclaim you fortunate throughout time, you, who desiring to decorate the triumphs of your people, have stamped the whole country with inscriptions.[125]

The text is interesting not only because it records how Liutprand took materials from Rome to Pavia, but also because it imitates formulaic phrases from monumental inscriptions in Rome. The reference to a church shining and glistening with various

[123] For a brief descriptionf of a sculptural fragment from the palace complex at Corteolona and bibliography see John Mitchell, "Relieffragment mit Kopf eines Hirschkalbs," in Stiegemann and Wemhoff, vol. 1 of *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, 16–17.

[124] Nicholas Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568–774* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 2003), 235–253.

[125] Ecce domus domini perpulchro condita textu / Emicat et vario fulget distincta metallo, / Marmora cui pretiosa dedit museumque columnas / Roma, caput fidei, illustrant quam lumina mundi./ Euge auctor sacri, princeps Leutbrande, laboris!/ Te tua felicem clamabunt acta per aevum, / Qui propriae gentis cupiens ornare triumphos, / His titulis patriam signasti denique totam. *Sylloge laureshamensis*, nr. 1.10, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH Poetae* 1 (Berlin: 1881), 105; trans. Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy,* 248.

metals (*distincta metallo*) recalls the inscriptions from early medieval mosaic programs in Rome, discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation. This suggests that Liutprand might have patterned his church in Corteolona — or at the very least the inscription — after contemporary Roman models.

A second inscription from the same church provides further insight into Liutprand's motivations. In what may be one of the earliest references to Byzantine Iconoclasm anywhere,[126] the inscription begins by referring to an emperor Leo – presumably Liutprand's contemporary, Leo III – as one who fell into schism: "When the emperor Leo fell into the pit of schism from the heights of the just, persuaded by a wretched philosopher, then I, King Liutprand, decided to build for myself baths with this beautiful marble and these columns."[127] Liutprand's initial desire to build baths, much like an ancient Roman emperor, is implicitly associated with unorthodox rule by mentioning it in the same breath as Leo's fall into schism.[128] Building a bath complex was not a devout venture, and so the inscription goes on to describe how Liutprand experienced a change of heart during a pilgrimage to Rome.

> Then later I hastened as a devoted man to Rome itself, and when I reached it, I kissed the holy head of S. Anastasius, and suddenly you, Christ, show to me your servant of the ancestral place, in this heart of mine, that I am to build this house in which I pray, holding the palms of my hands towards the stars, "Son of God, on behalf of a faithful people, you who rule the angelic assembly and govern all

[126] Brubaker and Haldon have questioned the extent to which Leo III actually promoted iconoclastic policies, since the textual evidence from the early eighth century is so sparse. Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 79–93.

[127] Quando Leo cecidit, misero doctore suasus, / Scismatis in foveam recto de culmine Caesar, / Tunc ego regales statui his mihi condere thermas / Marmoribus pulchris Leutbrant rex atque columnis. *Sylloge laureshamensis*, nr. 1.12, ed. Dümmler, *Poetae* 1, 106; trans. Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy,* 248.

[128] On building baths as an imperial practice, see Horst Bredekamp, *Der schwimmende Souverän: Karl der Große und die Bildpolitik des Körpers; eine Studie zum schematischen Bildakt* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2014).

> things, I pray that you make the Catholic faith grow with me, and that you favor this temple, just as was said unto Solomon himself."[129]

The Lombard king's later pious actions are distinguished from his earlier impious desires by aligning Liutprand with a righteous biblical model for patronage, the Old Testament builder of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Corteolona inscriptions offer a portrait of a Lombard ruler who used monumental commissions to express his piety, looked to Rome as "the capital of the faith," and engaged with contemporary theological debates. Indeed, Liutprand explicitly used a reference to Byzantine Iconoclasm as a foil to build up his own reputation for orthodoxy and as an ally of the Roman church.[130] The importance of orthodoxy to Liutprand is communicated further in the plea at the end of the inscription to "make the Catholic faith grow with me."

The Corteolona inscriptions share several points in common with the *Tempietto* in Cividale. The reference to Liutprand as an "*auctor*" parallels the *Tempietto* reference to pious "*auctores*." Moreover, casting both buildings as "temples" also suggests that Liutprand and the patrons of the chapel in Cividale were thinking about their commissions in similar terms. Finally, the fact that Liutprand devised his church after seeing churches in Rome, adds credence to the possibility that the *Tempietto's* decorative program could have been inspired by contemporary Roman models. The slightly later basilica of San Salvatore in Brescia may also be added to the list of Lombard monuments

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[129] Sed Romam properans postquam devotus ad ipsam / Perveni atque sacro capiti mea basia fixi / Sancti Anastasii, servus tuus, ecce repente / Paterna de sede meo hanc in pectore, Christe, / Praeclaram fundare domum sub culmine monstras. / Talibus unde meas tendens ad sidera palmas / Vocibus oro: "Dei fili, pro plebe fideli, / Qui regis angelicos coetus, qui cuncta gubernas, / Fac, precor, ut crescat mecum catholicus ordo, / Et templo concede isti ut Salomoni locutus." *Sylloge laureshamensis*, nr. 1.12.5–14, ed. Dümmler, *Poetae* 1, 106; trans. Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy,* 248–249.

[130] Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy,* 250.

that appear to be inspired by churches in Rome; with its stuccoed arches, clipeate portraits in the spandrels, and narrative scenes arranged in grids on the nave walls, San Salvatore adopts a format similar to the apostolic basilicas in Rome, Old Saint Peter's and San Paolo fuori le mura.

Another monument that may testify to Lombard awareness of the image debates of the eighth and ninth centuries is the crypt of Epiphanius at San Vincenzo al Volturno with its figural stained glass window, mentioned above [see Fig. 52]. In the stained glass window from San Vincenzo al Volturno, Christ's face was rendered with a single piece of clear, unmarked glass, while the hair, halo, and body were assembled from pieces of variously colored glass held together by lead cames.[131] According to Dell'Acqua's persuasive interpretation, the San Vincenzo al Volturno window is an innovative attempt to grapple with the paradox of Christ's dual nature. Faced with the challenge of depicting a subject that was simultaneously perceptible as a human being and unimaginable as God, the artisan(s) responsible for the window literally worked around the problem of Christ's divinity by focusing on the frame.[132] As pure light, the transparent face of the San Vincenzo al Volturno Christ appears incorporeal and divine, but the circumscribing frame renders the divine perceptible, as through an incarnate body.[133]

To support her argument, Dell'Acqua connected the window to the writings of Ambrosius Autpertus (ca. 730–784), a Benedictine monk, who was a prolific writer and the abbot of San Vincenzo al Volturno until his death in 784. Autpertus's theological

[131] Dell'Acqua, "The Christ from San Vincenzo al Volturno," 13.

[132] Francesca dell'Acqua, "Il volto di Cristo e il dilemma dell'artista: un esempio di IX secolo," in *"Conosco un ottimo storico dell'arte…": Per Enrico Castelnuovo. Scritti di allievi e amici pisani,* ed. M. M. Donato and M. Ferretti (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2012): 22.

[133] Ibid.

writings had important repercussions for artistic production at the monastery, as John Mitchell, Fernanda de'Maffei, and Hans Belting have all argued that his Marian theology directly inspired the iconographic program of the frescoed crypt at the site.[134] Moreover, the crypt may have been the originally intended location of the stained glass window of Christ.[135]

Regarding the connection between Ambrosius' theology and the window, Dell'Acqua pointed to a passage in his treatise on the Apocalypse in which he discussed the symbolism of the carbuncle in the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem, a gem thought to emit its own light. Ambrosius noted that the materiality and color of the carbuncle connoted an earthly nature, but the light it emitted hinted at incorporeal divinity.[136] Having both corporeal and incorporeal properties, the carbuncle was an ideal analogy for the paradox of Christ's dual nature. The gem-like, illuminated panes of glass in the San Vincenzo al Volturno window visualize the same paradox. Dell'Acqua connected this artistic experiment to the writings of John of Damascus (ca. 675–749) and the image

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[134] John Mitchell, "The Crypt Reappraised," in *San Vincenzo al Volturno: the 1980-86 excavations 1,* Archaeological Monographs of the Brisitsh School at Rome 7, ed. Richard Hodges, Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome 7 (London, British School at Rome, 1993), 93–97; Fernanda de'Maffei, "Le arti a San Vincenzo al Volturno: il ciclo della cripta di Epifanio," in *San Vincenzo al Volturno: una grande abbazia altomedievale nel Molise; Atti del I Convegno di studi sul Medioevo meridionale (Venafro, S. Vincenzo al Volturno, 19–22 maggio 1982),* ed. Faustino Avagliano (Montecassino: Pubblicazioni cassinesi, 1985), 296–371; Hans Belting, *Studien zur Beneventanischen Malerei* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1968), 216–222.

[135] Dell'Acqua, "Dilemma," 24–25.

[136] Calculus, lapis est pretiosus, qui alio quoque uocabulo usitatius carbunculus uocatur. Vtrumque autem nomen in diuina scriptura, et pro lapide pretioso et pro carbone saepius ponitur. Lapis igitur iste ideo calculus uel carbunculus appellatur, quia nimirum a carbone similitudinem ducere uidetur. Sicut enim carbo succensus, qua magnitudine subsistit, ea in tenebris positus refulget, ita et hic lapis a multis facere perhibetur. Quis itaque per hunc, nisi mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus designatur? Bene autem per lapidem calculum, qui et secundum hanc Reuelationem candidus esse, et naturae suae adtestatione in tenebris lucere perhibetur, incarnata Veritas exprimitur, quia uidelicet et iuxta humanitatis nostrae naturam sine ulla peccati obfuscatione mundus inter homines apparuit, et diuinitatis suae luce tenebras nostrae mortalitatis inlustrauit. Ambrosius Autpertus, *Expositio in Apocalypsin,* 2.2.17b.3, ed. Robert Weber, *CCCM* 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975); Dell'Acqua, "Dilemma," 25.

debates in the East that were occuring at the same time Ambrosius was writing in the mid-eighth century and the window was devised in the early ninth century.[137]

The San Vincenzo al Volturno window emerges out of a long-standing tradition of imagining God through light-based imagery, one in which the *Tempietto Longobardo* also participates. However, the comparison between the west wall of the *Tempietto* and the window from San Vincenzo al Volturno extends beyond the fact that the sites use light as a medium to imagine divinity. Both sites also use singular and pluralized visual forms. At San Vincenzo al Volturno, Christ's face appears homogenous as a field of pure light, while the hair, halo, and body form a composite frame, since these areas are assembled from disparate pieces of colored glass. Christ's humanity is indicated through the variegated frame, but his divinity is represented in the singularity of the uninterrupted light at the center. Likewise, the virtuosic openwork arch at Cividale is massive as an embellishing frame for the lunette painting [see Fig. 62]. It signals the status of the fresco as the most important image on the wall. Yet, the frame may do more than simply signal importance. Like the San Vincenzo al Volturno window, the composite qualities of the arch at Cividale may have indicated Christ's terrestrial nature while the smooth surface unity of the fresco suggested Christ's celestial nature.

The fact that the frame around the west lunette is designed as a scroll of openwork grapevines is significant in this respect, since the Eucharist was one way Christ's presence could be pluralized and made accessible on earth. This interpretation resonates with theories promoted by Christian neo-Platonism, an intellectual tradition replete with metaphors of light to describe divinity and preoccupied with the relationship between

[137] Dell'Acqua, "The Christ from San Vincenzo al Volturno," 17.

divine Unity and terrestrial diversity.[138] For pseudo-Dionysius, the act of unveiling, fragmenting, and distributing the bread and wine in the Mass functioned as an analogy for the Incarnation when God became composite and visually accessible to humanity.[139] Charles Barber has noted that Maximus the Confessor, a seventh-century theologian transplanted from Constantinople and living in Rome, was similarly concerned with using neo-Platonic thought to expound on the link between the Eucharist and the Incarnation.[140] For both pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, multiplicity and singularity were markers of the ontological difference between earth and heaven. When Christ became incarnate on earth, he became sensorially perceptible and multifarious. When the bread and wine in the Eucharist was distributed, Christ was likewise revealed and multiplied before the eyes of the congregation. At Cividale, the stucco arch of grapevines is composed of separate pieces and the fresco of Christ as light was formed through the fusion of pigment into a single, uniform image. The contrast between the processes of production suggest that the chapel's makers may have been interested in the Eucharist as a pluralized, terrestrial manifestation of Christ, who was at the same time conceived of as a divine, singular, and indivisible light. The common material substrate shared by fresco

[138] Neo-Platonism was well-known in Rome in the seventh and eight centuries. In the early seventh century, Gregory the Great called pseudo-Dionysius an "ancient and venerable Father." (*Fertur uero Dionysius Areopagita, antiquus uidelicet et uenerabilis pater*). Pope Martin I quoted his writings at the Lateran Council of 649, where Maximus the Confessor was also present. In 758, Pope Paul sent a copy of pseudo-Dionysius's writings to the Merovingian ruler, Pepin the Short, who then donated the texts to the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in euangelia,* 34.12.336, ed. Raymond Étaix, *CCSL* 141 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 312; Jean Leclerq, "Influence and Noninfluence of Dionysius in the Western Middle Ages," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works,* trans. Colm Luibhéid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 26; Schapiro, review of *The Fresco Cycle of S. Maria*, 156–157.

[139] Colm Luibhéid (trans.), *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press 1987), 222. For a discussion of the fragmentation of the Eucharist in a later medieval context see: Caroline Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 142–151.

[140] Charles Barber, "The Koimesis Church, Nicaea: The Limits of Representation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 41 (1991): 49–50.

painting and stucco sculpture reinforces the notion that the image at the center of the lunette and the grapevines in the frame are two aspects of the same person/divinity.

Like the Eucharist, the saints were also conceived of as pluralized, earthly extensions of Christ. In early medieval hagiography, writers often grappled with the problem of explaining how the saints, who lived in different times and places and faced different challenges in their earthly lives, could nonetheless all be the same, united as members of the body of Christ.[141] The belief has roots in 1 Corinthians 12:12, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." In the fourth century, Victricius of Rouen described how the crowns of the martyrs were adorned with a variety of jewels to symbolize their virtues, including "wisdom, intellect, knowledge, truth, good counsel, courage, endurance, self-control, justice, good sense, patience, [and] chastity."[142] As Cynthia Hahn has argued, Victricius' image of an assortment of gems held together by a

[141] The one Late Antique writer who explored this concept most fully was probably Victricius of Rouen, a late fourth-century bishop in Gaul. In a sermon on the nature of the saints and their relics, *De laude sanctorum*, Victricius explained that "Unity does not allow diversity; Unity diffuses itself widely without losing anything of itself" (*Diuersitas enim unitati extranea est. Vnitas late sine sui diffunditur detrimento*) and "God diffuses Himself far and wide and without loss to Himself lends out His light. In any part He is whole intellect, whole sight, whole mind, whole Himself" (*Deus longe late que diffunditur et suum lumen sine sui fenerat detrimento. Quacumque in parte totus est sensus, totus uisus, totus animi, totus sui*). As a result, "we understand that they [the saints] are not inflicting upon themselves any loss by being dispersed, but that, enriched by the [Supreme] Unity, they are spreading their gifts" (*Nam cum ius translationis ipsis uolentibus agnoscamus, illud intellegimus non ipsos sibi inferre propria disseminatione iacturam, sed spargere beneficia unitate ditatos*). This concept was important for Victricius because it justified the practice of dividing up saintly bodies into relic fragments and dispersing them across the Christian world. Establishing this fact would have been imperative in fourth-century Gaul, where the relative scarcity of locally available saints meant that bishops had to import relics, often in fragments, from other locations around the Mediterranean. Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum* 7.11–12, 8.15–16, and 9.36–39, ed. Jacques Mulders and Roland Demeulenaere, *CCSL* 64 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 79, 81, and 84; trans. Philippe Buc, "Victricius of Rouen, *In Praise of the Saints*," in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 40–43; Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 95–96.

[142] Sunt hic diademata uariis gemmarum distincta luminibus sapientiae, intellectus, scientiae, ueritatis, consilii, fortitudinis, tolerantiae, temperantiae, iustitiae, prudentiae, patientiae, castitatis. Istae in lapidibus singulis sunt singulae expressae scriptae que uirtutes. Victricius, *De laude sanctorum,* 12.27–31, ed. Demeulenaere, *CCSL* 64, 89; trans. Buc, "Victricius," 46.

singular, gold base parallels the biblical metaphor of the saints as diverse members of Christ's singular body.[143] Two centuries later, Gregory of Tours famously wrote:

> Some people have asked us whether we should say the *vita* or *vitae* of the saints… it is better to speak of the 'Life of the Fathers' rather than the 'Lives of the Fathers,' the more so since there is a diversity of merits and virtues among them, but the one life of the body sustains them all in this world.[144]

In other words, even though the saints were unique individuals, they all lived the same life in Christ.

Referring to the saints' diverse virtues as if they were jewels worn on their bodies was a recurring formula in early medieval literature. Gregory of Tours repeated the trope several times in his history of the Franks, asserting: "in Gaul, too, many were crowned with heavenly gems and received martyrdom in Christ's name."[145] In Gregory the Great's (540–604) *Moralia in Iob*, he wrote that the saints' intellect held together the rest of their virtues, like gold held together gems.[146] Bede (673–735) understood the gems set on the Old Testament High Priest's rational as designating "the manifold grace of the various virtues which should always appear in the heart of a priest, arranged in harmonious succession."[147] At Cividale, the medium of stucco relief emphasizes the

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[143] Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 44.

[144] et quaeritur a quibusdam utrum Vitam sanctorum, an Vitas … Unde manifestum est melius dici Vitam Patrum quam Vitas: quia cum sit diversitas meritorum virtutumque, una tamen omnes vita corporis alit in mundo. Gregory of Tours, *Vitae patrum,* "Prologus," ed. J.P. Migne, *PL* 71 (Paris: 1849), col. 1010; trans. Edward James, *Gregory of Tours: Life of the Fathers* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1985), 2.

[145] Sed et in Galleis multi pro Christi nomine sunt per martyrium gemmis caelestibus coronati; quorum passionum historiae apud nos fideliter usque hodie retinentur. Gregory of Tours, *Historiarum libri X*, 1.28.14, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *MGH SS* 1,1 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1951); trans. Lewis Thorpe, *The History of the Franks* (New York: Penguin, 1974), 85.

[146] Nec abhorret a rationis ordine quod auro dicimus ingenium designari, quia sicut in ornamento aurum supponitur, ut gemmarum desuper ordo disponatur, ita clara sanctorum ingenia diuinis muneribus humiliter substernuntur, et distincta super se gratiarum dona percipiunt. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 22.4.64–68, ed. Marcus Adriaen, *CCSL* 143A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 89.

[147] Haec gemmarum positio diuersarum in rationali multiplicem uariarum uirtutum gratiam designat quae concordi serie disposita in sacerdotis debet corde semper apparere. Bede, *De tabernaculo* 3.425–428, ed.

jewels the female saints wear. Not only do the saints actually hold gemmed objects – crowns and crosses – their clothing also bears small stucco jewels, affixed with glue to their hems [Fig. 67]. The saints probably had earrings made from glass or gold in their ears, which are pierced [Fig. 68]. The decision to sculpt the saints' ornaments in three-dimensional detail rather than paint them illusionistically onto the reliefs draws attention to the saint's composite qualities, and the diverse material jewels that they wear signal their diverse, immaterial virtues. Like the Eucharist, the saints were diverse and multiple in their virtues, but all united by their shared life in Christ.[148] In this sense, the stucco reliefs in the upper register of the *Tempietto* function in a way that is similar to the grapevine frame around the Christ fresco. They provide a composite frame for the window where Christ was represented through the medium of light.

The question then becomes why the male saints in the middle register were not also sculpted in stucco. Early medieval commentators on sainthood tended to emphasize the subtending unity among the saints in spite of their superficial differences; and jewels and crowns could be a way to imagine virtues for both men and women.[149] The male

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David Hurst, *CCSL* 119A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969) 103; trans. Arthur G. Holder, *Bede: On the Tabernacle* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), 119–120.

[148] An interesting elision between gems and grape clusters occurs in Late Antique and early medieval grammar books where the phrase "the vines put forth gems" (*gemmare uites*) is repeatedly used as the conventional example of a metaphor. Julius Victor, *Ars rhetorica*, 83.4, ed. Remo Giomini and Maria Silvana Celentano, *C. Iulii Victoris Ars rhetorica*, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1980); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarvm*, ed. Lindsay, *Etymologiarvm*, 1.37.2; *Ars Laureshamensis: Expositio in Donatm maiorem*, "De tropis," 3.60; ed. Bengt Löfstedt, *CCCM* 40A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), 226; Sedulius Scotus, *In Donati artem maiorem* 3.75, ed. Bengt Löfstedt, *CCCM* 40B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), 376.

[149] Augustine emphasized that both men and women could achieve martyrdom equally. "Old men have been crowned, young men crowned, adolescents have been crowned, boys crowned, men have been crowned, women crowned. And among the women every age has been crowned. Nor did the female sex say, 'I am unequal, because of my sex, to subduing the devil.' It concentrated rather on overthrowing the enemy by whom it had been overthrown, and outfighting by faith the one by whom it had allowed itself to be seduced. Did even women, I ask you, rely presumptuously on their own strength? It was any and every person, after all, who was told, For what have you got that you did not receive? (1 Cor 4:7). So the glory of the martyrs is the glory of Christ going ahead of the martyrs, filling the martyrs, crowning the martyrs."

saints in Cividale might have been rendered in stucco as well. However, since the the time of Tertullian, issues of bodily adornment and jewelry occupied a central position in discussions of specifically female sanctity.[150] For example, commenting on Psalm 44:9, "The queen stood on your right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety," Cassiodorus differentiated each category of saint from the others by aligning the different types with different materials or colors.

> Variety … denotes the most beautiful diversity of virtues, for it is adorned with the gold of the apostles, the silver of the prophets, the jewels of the virgins, the crimson of martyrs, the purple of penitents. So this is the variety of unity woven together from all nations to please the Lord's eyes with their devoted lives.[151]

The fundamental unity of the saints was maintained by imagining them woven together into a single piece of cloth, but notably, the jewels which adorned this cloth symbolized the female virgin saints. Similarly, in his treatise on virginity, the Anglo-Saxon bishop,

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(*coronati sunt senes, coronati sunt iuuenes, coronati adulescentes, coronati pueri, coronati uiri, coronatae feminae. et in feminis omnis aetas coronata est; nec dixit femina, inpar sum sexu ad deuincendum diabolum. attendit magis hostem deiciendum, a quo deiecta est, et expugnandum fide, cui consenserat seductione. numquid et feminae de suis uiribus praesumserunt? omni enim homini dictum est, quid enim habes quod non accepisti? gloria ergo martyrum, gloria christi praecedentis martyres, implentis martyres, coronantis martyres*.). Augustine, *Sermones,* 305A, ed. Morin, *MiAg* 1, 56; trans. Edmund Hill, *Sermons (273-305A) on the Saints,* vol. III/8 of *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st* Century, ed. John E. Rotelle (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1994), 325. Likewise, in the *Life of the Fathers*, Gregory of Tours wrote: "He [Christ] exhorts us to live after the example of the saints and to fortify ourselves by his incessant precepts. He gives us as models not only men, but also the lesser sex, who fight not feebly, but with a virile strength; he brings into his celestial kingdom not only men, who fight as they should, but also women, who exert themselves in the struggle with success." (*qui nos exemplis sanctorum vivere incessabili praeceptionis suae munere cohortatur, nobisque non modo viros, sed etiam ipsum inferiorem sexum, non segniter, sed viriliter agonizantem praebet exemplum; qui non solum viris legitime decertantibus, verum etiam feminis in his praeliis favorabiliter desudantibus.*) Gregory of Tours, *Vitae patrum*, 19; ed. Migne, *PL* 71, col. 1087; trans. James, *Life of the Fathers,* 124. See also Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500–1100* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 39–40.

[150] Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*, 1.6, ed. Marie Turcan, *SC* 173, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971).

[151] Sed hic uarietatem, aut linguas multiplices significat, quia omnis gens secundum suam patriam in ecclesia psallit auctori; aut uirtutum pulcherrimam diuersitatem. Ornatur enim auro apostolorum, argento prophetarum, gemmis uirginum, cocco martyrum, purpura paenitentium. Ista est ergo uarietas unitatis, quae oculis domini ex omnibus gentibus pia conuersatione placitura contexitur. Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum*, 44.313–318, ed. Adriaen, *CCSL* 97, 410; trans. P.G. Walsh, vol. 1 of *Cassiodorus: Explanation of the Psalms* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 447.

Aldhelm (ca. 639–709), drew a parallel between embroidery and metalwork when he explained why virgins should cultivate a diversity of virtues in their lives. Aldhelm compared a monochrome cloth and a sheet of gold without gems to a virgin who had no other virtues apart from chastity. He asserted that if a curtain was "made uniformly with a monochrome dye, it is immediately obvious that it will not appear pleasing to the glances of the eye nor beautiful against the most exquisite elegance of ornaments."[152] Likewise, "the pure sheet of gold itself, which excels all the other metals of silver and brass and tin, will seem somehow to lose its gloss without the topaz and garnet and the ruby glory of jewels or the precious stone of amber."[153] In the same way, virgins should not be content with chastity alone, but should adorn themselves in a diversity of merits. The female saints at Cividale were rendered in a medium that overtly draws attention to their bodily ornaments because the metaphor of being adorned in virtues like jewels had special purchase when describing specifically female saints.

The diverse processes used to produce stucco relief and fresco painting enabled the designers of the *Tempietto Longobardo's* program to visualize complex theological arguments addressing Christ's dual nature and the saints' essential unity despite their "diversity of merits and virtues." In light of this reading, it is necessary to ask who might have been involved in designing the chapel. While previous arguments about the patronage of the *Tempietto* have focused on Aistulf and Giseltrude as the "*auctores,*" it

[152] Nam et curtinae ueteris dilubri non simplici et singulari tincturae genere splenduisse leguntur, sed ex auro, iacintho, purpura, bis tincto cocco siue uermiculo cum bisso retorto dispari murice fulsisse describuntur. Aldhelm of Malmesbury, *Prosa de uirginitate* 15.179.25–27, ed. Scott Gwara, *CCSL* 124A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 179; trans. Michael Lapide and Michael Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979), 72.

[153] Sed quid de fucorum muricibus subtiliter comminiscimur? En, ipsius auri obriza lamina, quod cetera argenti et electri stagni que metalla praecellit, sine topazio et carbunculo et rubicunda gemmarum gloria uel sucini dracontia quodammodo uilescere uidebitur! Ibid., 15.181.28–32, ed. ibid., 181; trans. ibid.

seems likely that an ecclesiastical official like Patriarch Callistus (sed. ca. 730–756) or Patriarch Sigualdo (sed. ca. 756–787) also played a part in the design.

Nicholas Everett's work on Lombard literacy corroborates Tavano's claim that the *Tempietto Longobardo's* painted donor inscription was likely composed by a church official, who was familiar with Sedulius' *Carmen paschale*. Everett demonstrated that in the eighth century monks and ecclesiastical officials were the one class of society most familiar with ancient epigraphy and most capable of composing original verses for Lombard patrons.[154] An official, like the patriarch, likely wrote the *Tempietto's* poem at the request of the donors. The theory is supported by the placement of the inscription inside the chapel. Though the majority of the inscription occurs on the south wall of the presbytery, some of the text spills over onto the south wall of the *aula*. The text block ends beneath the feet of the bishop saint, painted in the southeast corner of the *aula* [Fig. 69]. Of the six male saints painted in the chapel, only this saint is dressed as a bishop, while the other five are military saints. The fact that the bishop is the "odd man out" demands an explanation, but even more so since the figure stands suggestively over the inscription, as if to associate the bishop with the words beneath his feet. The placement of the text may represent a deliberate attempt to link the author of the verses with a saintly model, who held an office similar to his own.

The coordination between the text and the image implies that the patriarch's involvement in the decorative program may have extended beyond composing the inscription; he may have also had a hand in the arrangement of the images. If the patriarch of Aquileia was tasked with designing a decorative program for the chapel at

[154] Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy*, 239ff.

the request of or in collaboration with patrons like Aistulf and Giseltrude, then it is within the realm of possibility that the decorative program could have been designed to communicate the theological arguments suggested in this chapter.

Theological readings are rarely applied to Lombard monuments. Part of the reluctance to interpret Lombard art in terms of church doctrine arises from the long-standing misconception that many members of the Lombard upper classes were Arian Christians, a belief that Stephan Fanning has persuasively debunked.[155] A second obstacle is the negative picture provided in the *Liber Pontificalis*, which frequently portrays Lombard rulers as violent enemies of the Church. To demonstrate this point, Neil Christie compiled a list of adjectives used to describe Aistulf in the *Liber Pontificalis*, which include: "most hated," "savage," "shameless," "unspeakable," "atrocious," and "pestilential."[156] But perhaps the principal reason why art historians hesitate to credit Lombard monuments with theological content is the paucity of theological treatises produced by Lombard writers themselves. As Everett has noted, with the exception of Ambrosius Autpertus and one or two others, Lombard authors wrote very few biblical commentaries;[157] and with the exception of the Synod of Pavia, which was called in 698 to end the Three Chapters Controversy, Lombard rulers called no ecclesiastical councils to discuss church doctrine or otherwise pursue reform.[158] Nonetheless, the lack of abundant textual evidence should not lead to the assumption that the Lombards had no opinions about the church or theology. Liutprand may not have

[155] Stephen Fanning, "Lombard Arianism Reconsidered," *Speculum* 56, no. 2 (1981): 241–258.

[156] Christie, *Constantine to Charlemagne*, 49.

[157] Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy*, 290–291.

[158] Ibid., 82.

written a treatise addressing church doctrine, but the Corteolona inscriptions indicate that he used a monumental architectural and artistic project to take a stance on a contemporary doctrinal debate. Lombard inscriptions explicitly identify patrons as the "*auctores*" of buildings; in the absence of texts, historians of art must read the monuments authored by Lombard patrons as evidence of the complex ways in which they were engaging with contemporary issues of theology and orthodoxy.

A Palatine Chapel?

The present chapter's emphasis on image theory differs from the most common interpretation of the *Tempietto Longobardo*, which understands the chapel primarily a visual affirmation of Lombard political authority, legitimized through visual and material references to other imperial and royal monuments. The decision to give the *Tempietto's* perceived royal qualities priority has been justified by invoking the evidence provided by an anonymous, sixteenth-century document, written in Italian and kept in the Archivio Museo di Cividale, which preserves the memory of an older, now lost tenth-century diploma. The lost diploma apparently recorded how a female monastic community from Salt di Povoletto (7.5 kilometers northeast of modern-day Udine) merged with the monastery of Santa Maria in Valle sometime in the first quarter of the tenth century.[159] Recognizing the growth of the convent in Cividale, Berengar of Ivrea (r. 916–924) gave Santa Maria in Valle the lands of the adjacent "*corte Gastaldaga*" or gastald's court so that the monastery would have room to expand. In the Lombard period, the *gastaldius*

[159] Ma Berengario III imperatore, tra gli altri, volle che questo monastero da Salto fosse trasportato nella Cittá di Austria nel Friuli, che da poi fu chiamata con tal nome, nel luogo che si nominava Valle, ovvero Gastaldaga, dove era una chiesa antichissima accommodate al modo longobardo, la qual chiesa si pensa che sia stato tempio degli idoli. Questo si conosce da un privilegio antichissimoa nel quale Beregario III donò la corte Gastaldaga acciocché questo monasterio fosse amplificato, nel quale l'abbadessa e le vergini portarono le ossa di Pertrude in detto Monasterio. La fondazione di questo monasterio è stata l'anno settecento sessantadue. Mor, "Notizie Storiche," 255; Cecchelli, *I monumenti del Friuli*, 97.

regis was a functionary responsible for administering royal properties throughout the Lombard territories.[160] The presence of a gastald in many cities in the Lombard kingdom helped assert royal authority across the disparate dukedoms. The allusion to a "gastald's court" next to the monastery of Santa Maria in Valle led Torp and L'Orange to conclude that the Valley was a royal zone of the early medieval city of Cividale and that both the basilica of San Giovanni and the *Tempietto* were royal foundations, built to serve the needs of the king's representative, the gastald. Torp and L'Orange subsequently dubbed the *Tempietto* a "palatine chapel."[161] This led to an exhaustive discussion of the perceived royal qualities of the decorative program.[162]

The preocupation with the *Tempietto Longobardo* as a palatine chapel continues to dominate scholarship on the site. For example, Mitchell situated the *Tempietto* within a larger network of Lombard monuments in Pavia, Milan, Brescia, Benevento, and Spoleto, which all draw on classical visual idioms and which he identifies as examples of competing "prestige architecture," visual statements of the wealth and power of their aristocratic patrons.[163] Placed within this network of rival monuments, the *Tempietto* is

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[160] Cecchelli, *I monumenti del Friuli*, 144–145; Torp, *La cappella palatina*, 11.

[161] Torp, *L'Architettura*, 228; L'Orange, *La scultura*, 152.

[162] L'Orange argued that the procession of female saints carrying crowns in the upper register derives from the Roman ceremony of *aurum coronarium*, the presentation of crowns to the emperor. As mentioned above, Torp identified Late Antique and Byzantine imperial models for the frescoes. The inscription's color scheme – white letters against a dark purple background – has also been invoked in support of the royal reading of the program, since text written on a purple backdrop is often thought to be a prerogative of rulers. This last observation especially could be a modern misconception. For many early *codices purpurei*, there are no concrete, historical reasons to link them to imperial or royal patrons. John Lowden has suggested, "Maybe these books were not originally viewed as making points about earthly rulership at all. Maybe they were conceived of as gifts to the divine ruler, Christ, and his saints in the heavenly court." L'Orange, *La scultura,* 107–108; John Lowden, "The Royal/Imperial Book and the Image or Self-Image of the Medieval Ruler," in *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1993), 238.

[163] John Mitchell, "Artistic Patronage and Cultural Strategies in Lombard Italy," in *Towns and their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Nancy Gauthier, and Neil Christie (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 351–353.; idem., "The Power of Patronage and the Iconography of

understood as a building that legitimized Lombard authority to rule by drawing on the visual language of the imperial Roman past. Bente Kiilerich has also described the materials used in the *Tempietto* as "a visual sign of power," which took "recourse in the Romano-Byzantine heritage" and "linked their [the Lombards'] authority with that of earlier rulers."[164] Tavano argued that the proportions of the *Tempietto's* architecture follow Byzantine conventions and that the architects responsible for building it were, consequently, from Byzantium; for him, the decision to employ Byzantine craftsmen was an ideological choice that enabled the Lombard patrons to make a statement about their rule being comparable to contemporary Byzantium's.[165] Making a parallel argument, Leal has linked the stucco in Civdale to craftsmen from the Umayyad courts: "Since the Islamic Empire was the richest and most successful superpower of the period… it is likely that Lombard aristocrats would have regarded craftsmen from that region as practioners at the highest level, and may have commissioned them for such important projects as San Salvatore in Brescia and the Tempietto at Cividale."[166]

Each of these studies has adopted a narrow view of what can constitute a political statement in art. Legitimacy to rule is expressed solely through references to temporally and geographically distant empires: the Late Antique past or the contemporary Byzantine and Umayyad East. This chapter has suggested an alternative way in which the *Tempietto Longobardo* may be read politically, namely by demonstrating the patrons'

Quality in the Era of 774," in *774: ipotesi su una transizione; Atti del Seminario di Poggibonsi, 16–18 febbraio 2006,* ed. S. Gasparri (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 272–278.

[164] Kiilerich, "The Rhetoric of Materials," 99.

[165] Tavano, *Il Tempietto Longobardo*, 43.

[166] Leal, "Stuccoes of San Salvatore," 243; On the connections between Cividale and Umayyad stucco see: Isabella Vaj, "Il tempietto di Cividale e gli stucchi omayyadi," in Lusuardi Siena, *Cividale Longobarda,* 175–204.

awareness of contemporary events in Rome and theological debates. In the Middle Ages, the secular and the sacred spheres were inextricably intertwined; professing an opinion on a matter of church doctrine could be a highly political act. In arguing for a theological reading of the *Tempietto Longobardo's* program, this chapter nuances how scholars understand the political qualities of the monument.

That said, it bears stressing that calling the *Tempietto Longobardo* a "palatine chapel" is misleading. The term implies a certain amount of display on the part of a ruler who would use the space on a semi-regular basis to make public appearances, as in the ninth-century palace chapel in Aachen and the twelfth-century chapel in the Norman palace in Palermo, both of which have places for thrones.[167] In contrast, the *Tempietto* in Cividale is a small space, only ten by six meters. There is not enough room inside to hold large groups of people and no place for a throne. Although the interior decoration of the chapel is luxurious, the space does not lend itself to public spectacles. Arguments about the *Tempietto* as a visual statement of Lombard authority, need to be tempered by a consideration of the conditions under which such a small space could have conceivably been viewed.

The term "palatine" also presupposes a royal residence directly connected to the chapel. In Cividale, the chapel is affiliated with a gastaldry, not a palace, and even then, the evidence is speculative, based solely on a dubious early modern recension of a lost document. The sixteenth-century version of Berengar's diploma is the only surviving

[167] Torp cited the Palermo chapel as a comparison. Torp, *L'Architettura,* 236–237.

source that mentions a gastaldry in connection to the Valley in Cividale, and there are many reasons that the document should not be taken at face value.[168]

First, the document preserves the memory of a diploma that was already temporally removed from the Lombard period. The original diploma would have been written in the tenth century, close to a hundred and fifty years after the end of the Lombard kingdom in Italy. The lost diploma was never a direct source of information about the urban arrangement of Cividale in the eighth century.

Second, because the sixteenth-century text translated the original diploma from Latin into Italian, the early modern version must be read as a reworked and modernized transcription of the original text rather than a perfect copy. Changes to the information contained in Berengar's diploma as a result of its transmission are inevitable. For example, the use of the Italian "*corte Gastaldaga*" is suspect. Marilena Casirani has argued that in Lombard legal codes, a royal property administered by a royal functionary in *Langobardia major* is referred to as a *curtes* or *casas regis,* while the seat of the gastald is called a *curtis regia* or a *sacrum palatium.* The term "*gastaldaga*" or "*gastaldata*" was only used in *Langobardia minor* to indicate parts of cities under a gastald's jurisdiction.[169] Therefore, if the Valley was the location of a gastald's residence in Cividale, the sixteenth-century copy of Berengar's tenth-century diploma should have used something closer to *curtis regia* or *sacrum palatium* not *gastaldaga* to refer to it.[170]

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[168] Brozzi, "Richerche sulla zona," 257.

[169] Marilena Casirani, "La gastaldaga di Cividale: stato delle conoscenze sulle sedi del potere regio nell'Italia longobarda," in Lusuardi Siena, *Cividale Longobarda*, 66.

[170] However, Casirani also clarified that the Valley in Cividale would fit the pattern of where royal zones in other Lombard cities were located, since such zones tended to be built within the walls and near a city gate. She still thought it was possible that the Valley was a location for a gastald's court in Cividale. Ibid., 76.

Finally, as Cecchelli observed, the document is more accurately understood as a conflation of two texts, rather than a straightforward copy of one.[171] The document combines information contained in Berengar's lost diploma with information provided in another, much earlier document from 762, the so-called *Donazione Sestense*. The original *Donazione Sestense* is conserved in the archives in Nonantola, but a copy seems to have been made for and kept in the archives of the monastery of Santa Maria in Valle.[172] The donation records how the three Lombard brothers – Erfo, Marco, and Anto – donated all their property to two monasteries in Sesto al Reghena and Salt di Povoletto. Their mother, Pertrude, eventually retired to the monastery in Salt, where she became abbess and was venerated as a saint after she died. When the nuns moved from Salt to Cividale, they took Pertrude's bones with them. The sixteenth-century document in Cividale's archives uses information provided in the *Donazione Sestense* to blend the histories of the two female monasteries at Salt and Cividale. For example, when the early modern text gives the date for the foundation of the monastery of Santa Maria in Valle as 762, this date probably does not reflect the actual year the monastery in Cividale was founded but was instead appropriated from the *Donazione Sestense*. On its own, the sixteenth-century recension of Berengar's lost diploma is too fragile a piece of evidence to support the theory that the area around the basilica of San Giovanni and the *Tempietto* was a royal zone of the early medieval city.

Historians of early medieval art should let go of the notion that the *Tempietto Longobardo* was part of a palace. The chapel is more accurately understood as a semi-private oratory and relics chapel that would have only been seen by a restricted audience.

[171] Cecchelli, *I monumenti del Friuli*, 100–103.

[172] Ibid., 102.

Given the donor inscription's reference to *funus acerbum*, the commission may have been finished following Aistulf's death in 756, perhaps under the supervision of his widow, Giseltrude, and the patriarch of Aquileia, Siguald. Built in Aistulf and Giseltrude's hometown of Cividale, the chapel likely responded to earlier ducal commissions in the city, like the Altar of Ratchis, commissioned by Aistulf's brother in memory of their father Pemmon. The donor inscription on the Altar of Ratchis declares that temples in honor of God should be constructed everywhere, adorned with jewels and colorful marble.[173] The chapel in Cividale should be understood as one of these colorful, bejeweled Christian temples, built to commemorate members of the local Friulian ruling family.

Conclusions

In a 2006 article entitled, "Medium as Message in Carolingian Writing about Art," William Diebold argued that Carolingian exegetes, like Hrabanus Maurus and Amalarius of Metz, not only paid attention to medieval construction techniques and artistic processes but also ascribed meaning to them.[174] How a raw material was processed inflected the interpretations afforded by that material. Hrabanus, for example, used the difference between solid gold vessels and vessels that were merely gilded to illustrate different kinds of saintly virtue; similarly, Amalarius saw the contemporary practice of building walls by placing large cut stones on the outside and uncut rubble on the inside as a metaphor for how the more spiritually mature must protect those who were

[173] [ma]XIMA DONA XPI AD CLARIT SUBLEMI CONCESSA PEMMONI UBIQUE DIRUTO [fo]RMARENTUR TEMPLA NAM ET INTER RELIQUA [dom]UM BEATI JOHANNIS ORNABIT PENDOLA TEGURO PULCHRO ALTARE DITABIT MARMORIS COLORE RATCHIS HIDEBOHOHRIT. Gray, "The Paleography of Latin Inscriptions," nr. 27.

[174] William Diebold, "Medium as Message in Carolingian Writing about Art," *Word & Image* 22, no. 3 (2006): 197–198.

weaker in their faith.[175] In each case, the material was the same — gold or stone — but the interpretation differed on how that material was manipulated, whether the object in question was cast from solid gold or merely gilded and whether the stone was cut or uncut. Distinguishing between an iconology of matter (substance) and an iconology of medium (technique) is essential.

The reading of the decorative program at Cividale presented in this chapter is only possible if one regards the techniques used by medieval artisans to produce images as potential bearers of extra-iconographical meaning. Stucco relief and fresco painting share a similar material substrate, but the different ways that shared material was manipulated at Cividale influenced the meaning of the program overall. In interpreting medieval images, art historians must be willing to take into account not just what images are made of, but also how they were made.

Chapters One and Two have, therefore, stressed recognition of matter and an awareness of processes of production as keys to interpreting medieval stucco reliefs at two separate monuments in Italy. Chapter Three will examine a contrary phenomenon, namely stucco's capacity to masquerade as another material — carved stone — at the ninth-century *Westwerk* at Corvey.

[175] Ibid.

The *Westwerk* in Corvey: Imitation and Antiquity

Stucco Sculpture in the Carolingian Period

Around the turn of the ninth century, work began on a private oratory for the Carolingian bishop and abbot, Theodulf of Orléans (ca. 750–821) at Germigny-des-Prés, his villa near the monastery of Fleury; the chapel was dedicated in 806.[1] A late ninth- or early tenth-century list of the abbots of Fleury, the *Catalogus abbatum Floriacensium*, describes the chapel's lavish, multimedia program.

> For in fact, raising the whole basilica on vaults, he [Theodulf] made the interior of it lovely with flowering stuccoes and mosaic, and on the pavement he depicted an inlaid marble design, so that the eyes of the admiring could scarcely get enough of the pleasing sight.[2]

Although more than one nineteenth-century restoration campaign dramatically changed aspects of the program at Germigny-des-Prés, a glass mosaic depicting the Ark of the Covenant still adorns the main apse and is, in large part, original to Theodulf's time [Fig. 70].[3] Moreover, while much of the stucco *in situ* today dates to the nineteenth century, fragments of the original *floribus gipseis* mentioned in the Fleury list are conserved in the Musée Historique de l'Orléanais and in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris [Fig. 71].[4] The stucco fragments, which were originally painted, adopt rinceau,

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[1] Jenny H. Shaffer, "Letaldus of Micy, Germigny-des-Prés, and Aachen: Histories, Contexts, and the Problem of Likeness in Medieval Architecture," *Viator* 37 (2006): 70.

[2] Totam namque archuato opere eandem extruens basilicam, ita floribus gipseis atque musivo eius venustavit interiora, pavimentum quoque marmoreo depinxit emblemate, ut oculi intuentium vix grata saciarentur specie. *Catalogus abbatum Floriacensium,* ed. Otto Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15,1 (Hannover: 1887), p. 501, ln. 6.

[3] Anne-Orange Poilpre, "Le décor de l'oratoire de Germigny-des-Prés: l'authentique et le restauré," *Cahiers de civilizations médiévale* 41 (1998): 291–294; Paul Meyvaert, "Maximilien Théodore Chrétin and the Apse Mosaic at Germigny-des-Prés," *Gazette des Beaux-arts* 137, no. 1588/89 (2001): 214.

[4] François Heber-Suffin, "Germigny-des-Prés. Une œuvre exemplaire?" in Sapin, *Stucs et décors*, 181–182.

rosette, and palmette designs, set inside interwoven medallions and rendered in low relief. The stucco appeared primarily on such architectural elements as capitals, arches, niches, and the intradoses of windows.

The description of Theodulf's chapel in the Fleury list, though brief, is telling. The text explicitly identifies the floral reliefs as being made out of gypsum. The unambiguous labeling of the material suggests that, while stucco could sometimes be used for purposes of dissulmulation – that is, to imitate more expensive materials like marble – at Germigny-des-Prés the material was recognized for what it was, a gypsiferous, modeled medium. Moreover, stucco was one of several prestigious art forms employed in the oratory, along with mosaic and inlaid marble, and the text acclaims the overall effect of the program. It describes a place that was filled with so much beautiful ornamentation of so many different kinds that visitors could not tear their eyes away. Like Agnellus of Ravenna's references to metallic gypsum, discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation, the Fleury list indicates that stucco relief could be a respected medium, on par with mosaic.[5] This attitude toward the medium may be linked to the high esteem in which Early Christian monuments, which also made abundant use of stucco as a complement to mosaic, were held in the Carolingian period.

Theodulf's chapel at Germigny-des-Prés is not the main focus of this chapter. The main focus is the late Carolingian *Westwerk* at Corvey (ca. 873–885), where six, now fragmentary, life-size human figures were modeled in stucco [see Fig. 3]. Originally

[5] Agnellus was writing in the 830s–840s, only a few decades after the chapel at Germigny-des-Prés was consecrated. Matthias Exner has also suggested that stucco could have been an essential component in Charlemagne's palace chapel at Aachen, arguably the most lavish decorative program produced in the early Carolingian period. Matthias Exner, "La sculpture en stuc du haut Moyen Âge et de l'époque romane dans les pays de langue germanique: Tradition et innovations du point de vue technique et artistique," in Sapin, *Stucs et décors*, 331.

polychromed, the six reliefs occupied the spandrels of the lower arcades of the *Westwerk*'s main atrium.[6] Four male figures in military dress were set on the north and south spandrels, and two female figures in veils were set on the west. Nevertheless, Theodulf's chapel at Germigny-des-Prés provides a useful starting point for a discussion of the stucco figures in the *Westwerk* at Corvey because the earlier chapel demonstrates one way — though not the only way — that stucco sculpture might be situated within the larger, problematic phenomenon of the Carolingian *renovatio*. For historians of Carolingian art, it is often impossible to speak of any sculptural medium during the period without considering the possibility of dependence on antique models.[7] Because notions of antiquity and *renovatio* will be central in the present discussion of the *Westwerk* in Corvey, Theodulf's chapel at Germigny-des-Prés provides a useful introduction.

As Theodulf's personal oratory, the chapel at Germigny-des-Prés has an idiosyncratic decorative program, one that would be difficult to explain without Early Christian referents. The representation of the Ark of the Covenant in the main apse visually encapsulates some of Theodulf's distinctive opinions on the role of images in Christian practice. More than a decade earlier, he had discussed the Old Testament Ark in the *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, also known as the *Libri Carolini* (ca. 791–793), which he wrote in reaction to the iconophilic policies outlined in a flawed Latin

[6] Hilde Claussen et al., "Katalog der Stuckfragmente," in *Wandmalerei und Stuck aus karolingische Zeit,* vol. 2 of *Die Klosterkirche Corvey*, ed. Hilde Claussen and Anna Skriver (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2007), 396–397.

[7] Genevra Kornbluth, "Carolingian Engraved Gems: 'Golden Rome Is Reborn'?" in *Engraved Gems: Surivals and Revivals*, ed. Clifford Malcolm Brown (Hannover: University Press of New England, 1997), 46; Wolfgang Braunfels, "Karls des Grossen Bronzewerkstatt," in *Karolingische Kunst*, vol. 3 of *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben,* ed. Wolfgang Braunfels and Hermann Schnitzler (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1966), 189–190.

translation of the acts of the Council of Nicaea II in 787 that was available to the Carolingian court.[8] Going to the opposite extreme, Theodulf promoted a borderline iconoclastic theory of art, one in which the use of images was strictly curtailed to commemorating historical events and beautifying a space with ornament.[9] With the exception of five special kinds of *res sacratae* — including the Ark of the Covenant — Theodulf believed that material objects like images had no value in Christian religious practice, not even as didactic tools, since images were unable to convey spiritual truths in the same way that writing could.[10] That Theodulf could, more than ten years later, decorate a chapel with a highly symbolic, Christian image program was not an act of supreme hypocrisy on his part, but rather demonstrates a progression in his thinking about the visual arts and their capacity to communicate spiritual ideas. The evolution in Theodulf's views on images likely had much to do with his two-month stay in Rome for Charlemagne's coronation in 800/801. During that time, he would have seen many of the Early Christian mosaics in the city, such as those in Santa Maria Maggiore and Ss. Cosma e Damiano.[11] As Ann Freeman and Paul Meyvaert have persuasively argued, Theodulf's exposure to the visual programs in venerable, Early Christian churches probably inspired him to adopt a more elastic approach to Christian images as bearers of

[8] Ann Freeman and Paul Meyvaert, "The Meaning of Theodulf's Apse Mosaic at Germigny-des-Prés," *Gesta* 40, no. 2 (2001): 127; Lawrence Nees, "Theodulf's Apse at Germigny, the Sancta Sanctorum, and Jerusalem," in *Discovery and distinction in the early Middle Ages: studies in honor of John J. Contreni,* ed. Cullen J. Chandler and Steven A. Stofferahn (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2013), 179.

[9] Celia Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit, and Image in the *Libri Carolini*," *Recherches augustinienne* 21 (1986): 165.

[10] Celia Chazelle, "Not in Painting But in Writing: Augustine and the Supremacy of the Word in the *Libri Carolini*," in *Reading and Wisdom: The 'De doctrina christiana' of Augustine in the Middle Ages*, ed. Edward English, Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies 6 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press,, 1995), 1–22; David F. Appelby, "Instruction and Inspiration Through Images in the Carolingian Period," *Micrologus* 8 (2001): 91.

[11] Freeman and Meyvaert, "Theodulf's Apse Mosaic," 126; Nees, "Theodulf's Apse," 176.

spiritual content.[12] In other words, Theodulf's chapel would have been inconceivable without Early Christian precedents, which gave him the "go ahead" he needed to design a Christian image program that did more than simply beautify a space or commemorate a historical event.

The use of mosaic corroborates Freeman and Meyvaert's claim that Theodulf's chapel was shaped by his exposure to Early Christian monuments, since mosaic was a familiar artistic medium in Rome, but it was used with less frequency north of the Alps in the early Middle Ages.[13] The palace chapel at Aachen is a major exception, and there is evidence that the Aachen mosaic workshop provided tesserae for other, now destroyed mosaic programs in nearby Maastricht and Stavelot.[14] However, the use of mosaic at Aachen, like the medium's use at Germigny-des-Prés, was probably inspired by earlier decorative programs in Italy.[15] Decorating a space in a combination of mosaic and stucco, where the stucco appears mainly as an accent on architectural elements, intentionally recalls such systems of decoration in Late Antique Rome and Ravenna as those discussed in Chapter One.

Since Richard Krautheimer's influential article on Carolingian copies of Constantinian basilicas north of the Alps, it has been generally acknowledged that the Carolingian *renovatio* was not a wholesale revival of all the art and architecture of

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[12] Freeman and Meyvaert, "Theodulf's Apse Mosaic," 127.

[13] Germigny-des-Prés is often understood as a copy of Aachen, due mainly to Letaldus of Micy's tenth-century hagiographic history of Micy that claims that Theodulf built the chapel "manifestly in the likeness of Aachen." However, Jenny Shaffer has rightly emphasized that Letaldus's claim reveals less about Theodulf's original intentions than it does about the historical moment of the late tenth century and the monastic context in which Letaldus was writing. Shaffer, "Letaldus of Micy," 76.

[14] Sebastian Ristow and Wolfram Giertz, "Goldtessellae und Fensterglas: neue Untersuchungen zur Herstellung und Nutzung von Glas im Bereich der karolingerzeitlichen Pfalz Aachen," *Antike Welt* 44, no. 5 (2013): 59–66.

[15] Mitchell, "The Power of Patronage," 265–267.

Republican, Imperial, and Late Antique Rome but rather a strategic reactivation of patterns found primarily in Early Christian, especially Constantinian, monuments.[16] Carolingian makers and patrons of art were historically conscious enough to discern a difference between an early pagan Roman Empire, which they condemned, and a later Christian Roman Empire, which they admired.[17] The use of stucco and mosaic at Germigny-des-Prés illustrates such a link with Early Christian monuments, one that is both visually and historically substantiated.

That said, Theodulf's chapel does not replicate any one, single Early Christian chapel. Small details in the apse mosaic (identified, again, by Freeman and Meyvaert)[18] and the general concept behind the overall system of decoration can be tied to Early Christian churches in Rome, but the sources of other features, such as the building's unusual plan and individual patterns in the stucco reliefs, seem more eclectic.[19] For example, some of the stucco motifs at Germigny-des-Prés compare better to patterns in stucco from Lombard Italy and Umayyad Spain than to motifs from Late Antique monuments in Rome.[20] Therefore, Theodulf's appropriation of the visual language of Late Antiquity needs to be understood in terms of the active transformation of Early

[16] Richard Krautheimer, "The Carolingian Revival of Early Christian Architecture," *The Art Bulletin* 24, no. 1 (1942): 3ff. For a critique of the methodology, see Catherine Carver McCurrach, "'Renovatio' Reconsidered: Richard Krautheimer and the Iconoraphy of Architecture," *Gesta* 50, no. 1 (2011): 41–69.

[17] Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, 6.

[18] For example, Freeman and Meyvaert noted that the base of the apse at Germigny-des-Prés originally featured a representation of the river Jordan, shown in twelve undulations under the Ark. These undulations closely recall the setting of the scene of Joshua setting up twelve stones on the far bank of the Jordan in Santa Maria Maggiore. Freeman and Meyvaert, "Theodulf's Apse Mosaic," 132.

[19] The plan is comparable to Armenian churches. Armen Khatchatrian, "Notes sur l'architecture de l'église des Germigny-des-Prés," *Cahiers archéologiques* 7 (1954): 163–164.

[20] May Vieillard-Troiekouroff, "Tables de canons et stucs carolingiens," in *Stucchi e mosaici altomedioevali*, vol. 1 of *Atti dell'ottavo Congresso di studi sull'alto Medioevo,* Congresso di Studi sull'Arte dell'Alto Medioevo 8 (Milan: Ceschina, 1962), 168; Heber-Suffin, "Germigny-des-Prés," 184.

Christian models, which were supplemented by and blended with elements from other visual traditions. The example of Theodulf's chapel illustrates that Carolingian engagement with Late Antiquity was rarely as simple as a one-to-one, model-copy relationship or motivated by a desire to duplicate older forms without altering them in some way.[21]

Like the ornamental bands of stucco at Germigny-des-Prés, the stucco figures at Corvey can be presented in the modern literature in ways that stress perceived references to antiquity, transformed to serve a medieval agenda. Sapin, for example, has observed in general terms that, like the stucco sculptures in Cividale produced over a century earlier, the figures at Corvey "rappellent une esthétique antique, renouent avec un monumentalité et une distribution architecturée des espaces où s'impose une nouvelle iconographie."[22] The antique character that Sapin attributed to the Corvey reliefs presumably has to do with the effect of seeing life-size human figures standing on the capitals of piers, a format that recalls classical statues on plinths. However, if both the stucco at Germigny-des-Prés and that at Corvey drew on an antique aesthetic, then the sites' makers must have been relying on two completely different notions of what "antiquity" meant.

Consecrated eighty years after Theodulf's chapel, the late Carolingian *Westwerk's* use of stucco is nothing like that in the earlier monument. Whereas at Germigny-des-Prés, the stucco relief was relatively flat and applied like a skin to the wall in order to

[21] For an unusual example of a more direct model-copy relationship, see St. Stephan's in Chur, where the frescoes in a fifth-century apse were restored in the eighth or ninth century. Matthias Exner, "Renovatio contra Inventio: Kopienkritik an Denkmälern früh- und hochmittelalterlicher Wandmalerei," in *Original – Kopie – Zitat: Kunstwerke des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit: Wege der Aneignung – Formen der Überlieferung*, ed. Wolfgang Augustyn and Ulrich Söding (Passau: Klinger, 2010), 136.

[22] Christian Sapin, "Germigny-des-Prés et les décors carolingiens," in Sapin, *Le Stuc*, 165.

conceal seams in the underlying masonry, at Corvey the stucco figures were rendered in deeper relief and would have appeared more independent from the wall behind them. At the earlier chapel, the stucco was distributed evenly across the architecture in ornamental bands, but at the later *Westwerk*, the human figures were arranged separately, each set apart from the other on its own pier. Therefore, neither site can be taken as emblematic of all Carolingian monuments that deploy stucco relief. Stucco was always versatile in its applications, and consequently, there can be no monolithic account of what the medium looked like or meant during a single period.

The differences between Germigny-des-Prés and Corvey evince two different ways for Carolingian makers of art to engage with past visual models. The decorative program at Germigny-des-Prés grew out of the patron's personal interest in Early Christian monuments in Rome, where interior walls were covered in mosaic and relatively shallow, stucco relief. At Corvey, the use of stucco relief seems to represent an interest in an even older aesthetic of classical Roman sculpture by evoking the effect of individual, freestanding statues set on pedestals. If this is true, however, the makers of the reliefs at Corvey were not inspired by Roman ruins from the area immediately around the monastery. The official borders of the Roman Empire never reached as far as modern-day Westphalia, where Corvey is located.[23] While a Roman legion was once stationed in nearby Haltern am See (Roman Aliso), the area around the monastery has no major Roman monuments. I argue that the formal conventions of the *Westwerk*'s reliefs reflect an imagined, Carolingian notion of a distant, pre-Christian past. The Corvey reliefs simulate stone and call to mind general notions of antique sculpture. To

[23] For a discussion of the distribution of Roman monuments along the Rhineland frontier, see Rachel Kousser, "A Sacred Landscape: The Creation, Maintenance, and Destruction of Religious Monuments in Roman Germany," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 57/58 (2010): 122–123.

understand why this is, the reliefs must be historically situated in the time and place in which the *Westwerk* was built.

Architecture, Program, and Function

The abbey church of Sts. Stephan and Vitus was founded as an outpost to solidify the church's presence in Saxony following Charlemagne's prolonged war against and forced conversion of the Saxons. This intention is recorded in a letter written by Louis the Pious in 823, which granted lands and rights to Corvey and describes how Louis's father, Charlemagne, conquered the province of Saxony where the monastery was built.[24] After an unsuccessful first attempt in 815 to establish the monastery at one location, Hethis, the site was moved to its current location on the river Weser in 822 and dubbed Nova Corbeia (new Corbie) after the mother house in France, the site from which the founding monks came.[25] The church at Corvey underwent three construction campaigns during the ninth century (the first occuring from 822 to 844, the second from 870 to 873, and the third from 873 to 885), but the basilica that stands today is Baroque, built between 1667 and 1674.[26] The only part of the architecture that is original to the

[24] Ludowicus imperator cesar, servorum Dei amator, maxime monachorum, volens monasterium facere in provintia Saxonum, quam pater suus Karolus augustus subegerat in suam ditionem, emit itaque possessionem a quodam Bernhardo comite, qui tunc temporis nobilissimus Saxonum necnon in sua tribu princeps et precipuus habebatur. *Notitiae fundationis monasterii Corbeiensis,* ed. Otto Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15,2 (Hannover: 1888), p. 1044, ln. 30.

[25] Coepit autem aedificare in loco qui dicitur Hethis, ubi cum per sex et eo amplius annos laborassent, nihil proficere potuerunt, nisi quod religio sancta in loco deserto tradebatur. *Historia translationis Sancti Viti auctore monacho Corbeiensi (BHL-8718 BHL-8719)*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH SS* 2 (Hannover: 1829), p. 579, ln. 8.

[26] Uwe Lobbedey, "Die karolingische Klosterkirche zu Corvey," in *Die Macht des Wortes: benediktinisches Mönchtum im Spiegel Europas*, ed. Gerfried Sitar and Martin Kroker (Regensberg: Schnell and Steiner, 2009), 162.

Carolingian period is the *Westwerk*, which, according to the Corvey *Annales*, was constructed between 873 and 885.[27]

In June 2014, Corvey was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. As part of the application, a team of scholars engaged by the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe assembled an impressive catalogue of relevant historical documents, excavation records to date, and extant artistic decoration from the monastery, which was published in two volumes in 2007 and 2012 under the title: *Die Klosterkirche Corvey*.[28] Rather than focusing exclusively on the monastery's early medieval past, the publication sought to provide a comprehensive account of the monastery's entire history from its founding to the present.[29] In this chapter, I draw heavily on the information compiled in the recent catalogue.

Corvey's *Westwerk* was a massive, four-story addition to the west end of the monastery's church. Work on the structure began thirty years after the original basilica was consecrated. Nonetheless, the addition was directly connected to and conceived of as an expansion of the earlier structure, and therefore cannot be interpreted in isolation from the larger church.[30]

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[27] 873. Hoc anno fundamenta trium turrium posita in Corbeia nova a venerabili Adalgario abbate 6. Id. Aprelis, feria quarta. Item inundatio nimia et locustarum prodigiosa multitudo. […] 885. Dedicatio trium turrium. *Annales Corbeienses (658–1148),* ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz *MGH SS* 3 (Hannover: 1839), p. 3, ln. 27 and 35.

[28] Sveva Gai, Karl Heinrich Krüger, and Bernd Their (ed.), *Geschichte und Archäologie*, vol. 1 of *Die Klosterkirche Corvey* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2012); Hilde Claussen and Anna Skriver (ed.), *Wandmalerei und Stuck aus karolingische Zeit,* vol. 2 of *Die Klosterkirche Corvey* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2007).

[29] Sveva Gai, "Schlussbetrachtung," in Gai, Krüger, and Their, *Geschichte und Archäologie,* 670.

[30] Dagmar von Schönfeld de Reyes, *Westwerkprobleme: Zur Bedeutung der Westwerke in der kunsthistorischen Forschung* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften*,* 1999), 78.

Today, only two towers stand at the western corners, but in the Carolingian period, there may have also been a third, central tower [Fig. 72].[31] The façade was once accented with white and painted plaster, and a stone plaque with an inscription made of inset, gilded letters was set above the main door [Fig. 73].[32] The plaque still exists, though the original has now been moved inside the museum and replaced by a copy on the exterior of the building. It reads: *CIVITATEM ISTAM TV CIRCVMDA D(omine) ET ANGELI TVI CVSTODIANT MVROS EIVS*, "You, Lord, shelter this city, and may your angels watch over its walls."[33]

The *Westwerk* is accessible from the outside through a single door in the west façade. The structure has a square architectural footprint, and on the ground floor, four columns support a nine-part vault and define the center of the square [Fig. 74]. Unvaulted side aisles originally bordered the north, south, and east sides.[34] Ninth-century painted ornament is still evident in places, including a green, yellow, and red acanthus frieze that runs along the upper border of the walls [Fig. 75].[35]

The *Westwerk's* upper levels are accessible through staircases in the corner towers. The first space on the second floor off the staircase is the narthex, consisting of three vaulted bays; both the central and the north bay preserve fragments of Carolingian frescoes [Fig. 76]. In the central bay, stalks of blue and red foliage climb the vault's

[31] The *Annales* refer to the "Dedicatio trium turrium." However, the middle tower was apparently destoyed in the twelfth century. Lobbedey, "Die karolingische Klosterkirche, " 164.

[32] Hilde Claussen, "Einführung zu den Ausmalungsresten," in Claussen and Skriver, *Wandmalerei und Stuck*, 124–127.

[33] Karl Heinrich Krüger, "Zur Geschichte des Klosters Corvey," in Gai, Krüger, and Their, *Geschichte und Archäologie*, 30.

[34] The side aisles are vaulted today, but originally they had flat, wood roofs. Lobbedey, "karolingische Klosterkirche, " 164.

[35] Claussen, "Ausmalungsresten," 108–113.

arrises, while the piers have figural imagery just above their imposts [Fig. 77]. The western piers feature depictions of ships, and a dolphin and other sea creatures are discernible swimming in the water beneath the ship on the northwest pier [Fig. 78]. Two frescoes on the northeast pier of the central bay portray naked human figures, one riding a dolphin on the south face of the pier and the other riding a fanciful hippocamp with a long neck on the north face of the pier [Fig. 79]. In the north bay, the surviving frescoes occur primarily on the north wall [Fig. 80]. These represent Odysseus and Scylla, a siren playing a harp, and a sea-centaur [Fig. 81].

East of the narthex is the *Westwerk's* main atrium, a three-story tall, covered square space [Fig. 82].[36] On the main floor, the atrium is bordered on the north, south, and west sides by vaulted passages (the west side being the narthex). The east side is the exception. Today, the eastern wall is obstructed by the back of a Baroque organ, but in the ninth century, the east wall likely opened directly onto the adjacent basilica. Arched windows would have connected the *Westwerk* to the basilica and enabled people standing in the *Westwerk* to both see and hear what was happening in the main church.[37]

Moving higher in the atrium, the upper story comprises arcaded galleries. The west gallery above the narthex looks down onto the atrium through one large, central window flanked by smaller, double windows. The galleries on the north and south sides of the atrium each have three double windows.

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[36] Today, a flat, timber ceiling covers the atrium, though it was probably vaulted originally. Uwe Lobbedey, "Die Baugestalt des Corveyer Westwerks: Forschungsstand und Aufgaben," in Poeschke, *Sinopien und Stuck*, 116.

[37] Carol Heitz, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne: Les formes et leur fonctions* (Paris: Picard, 1980), 56.

Much of the atrium was once colorfully painted, but given the fragmentary nature of the polychromy, it is difficult to piece together a holistic picture of what the space would have looked like in the ninth century. The recent publication, *Die Klosterkirche Corvey*, provides several useful reconstructions [see Fig. 3]. On the atrium's main floor, the bases of the rectangular piers were painted red and yellow, the bodies of the piers were solid red, and the imposts came in a variety of color combinations of red, yellow, blue, and green.[38] Painted acanthus ornament in red and yellow decorated the intradoses of the atrium's lower arcades, while the intradoses in the upper gallery story had geometric ornament.[39] In the double windows, the intradoses of the larger arches were painted in a pattern of alternating pink and green half-circles. The smaller arches had more complex patterns of perspectival rhombuses and crisscrosses, executed in shades of red, yellow, blue, and green. Traces of painted fictive columns also survive on the corners of the windows in the upper gallery. Wall paintings depicting similar fictive columns are known from other Carolingian monuments, such as the Torhalle at Lorsch and the abbey of St-Germain in Auxerre.[40]

Finally, there was also the *Westwerk's* sculptural component. The six stucco reliefs were first discovered in 1960, when archaeological excavations found thirty-five fragments used as architectural filler in the floor of the second story of the *Westwerk* [Fig.

[38] Claussen, "Ausmalungsresten," 86.

[39] Hilde Claussen, "Les frises d'acanthe et géométriques du *Westwerk* de Corvey, " in *Édifices et peintures aux Ive-XIe siècles; Actes du 2e colloque C.N.R.S. Archéologie et enduits peints. Auxerre: 1992*, ed. Christian Sapin (Auxerre: Musée d'Auxerre, 1994), 99–113.

[40] Ibid.; Kerstin Merkel, "Die Antikenrezeption der sogenannten Lorscher Torhalle," *Kunst in Hessen und am Mittelrhein* 32/33 (1992/93): 23.

83].[41] In 1992, preparatory drawings that matched the fragments were discovered, sketched directly onto the *Westwerk's* ninth-century masonry [Fig. 84].[42] Wood wedges had been used to affix the figures to the wall, and these left imprints in both in the wall mortar and in some of the surviving stucco fragments. This allowed some pieces to be matched with their corresponding underdrawings [Fig. 85].[43] The imprints in the mortar also suggest that the wedges were driven into the walls while the mortar was still wet. The stucco figures were, therefore, in phase with the ninth-century architecture of the *Westwerk* and date to before the *Westwerk's* completion in 885.[44] Given the life-size scale and the depth of the relief, the revelation that the figures were late Carolingian surprised many historians of medieval art.[45] Like the recently carbon-dated Virgin and Child sculpture in Brescia discussed in Chapter Two, the Corvey fragments expose the limitations of a chronology of early medieval art that assumes that large-scale, figural sculpture must date to the Romanesque period or later.

The two female figures in stucco were located just beneath the lower corners of the upper gallery's central window on the west side of the atrium. Like the female saints in Cividale, the Corvey figures were depicted with their bodies turning in and their hands raised, suggesting that something in the window between them deserved veneration. The special arrangement only occurred on the west side of the atrium, since the north and the south galleries have no large, central apertures. The male figures faced iconically

[41] Anna Skriver, "Restaurierungsgeschichte der Ausmalung des Westwerks," in Claussen and Skriver, *Wandmalerei und Stuck*, 16.

[42] Hilde Claussen, "Karolingische Sinopien und Stuckfragmente im Corveyer Westwerk," in Poeschke, *Sinopien und Stuck,* 9.

[43] Gerhard Drescher and Ingrid Frohnert, "Auswahl-Katalog der Holzkeile und Keillöcher," in Claussen and Skriver, *Wandmalerei und Stuck*, 424–425.

[44] Ibid., 428–429.

[45] Claussen, "Sinopien und Stuckfragmente," 10.

forward and so did not interact with the architecture in the same way that the female figures did.

The central window on the west side of the atrium has been a primary piece of evidence in one side of the debate over the *Westwerk's* function.[46] Drawing a comparison with the controversial royal gallery in the palace chapel at Aachen, Alois Fuchs was the first of many scholars to suggest that the upper gallery in the *Westwerk* at Corvey served as the setting for a throne.[47] The central, western window would have provided a frame for the throne, where a seated ruler could sit and gaze down into the main basilica through a corresponding window in the eastern wall.[48] However, given the fact that no Carolingian monarch is recorded as having visited Corvey before Arnulf of Carinthia (r. 887–899) in 889, four years after the *Westwerk* was consecrated, the notion that the *Westwerk* was begun sixteen years earlier on the offchance that a king might someday stop by seems improbable.[49]

In 1590, Johannes Letzner, a Lutheran priest with an interest in local histories, published a book on the abbey at Corvey in which he outlined a liturgical use for the *Westwerk*. Letzner's work has since served as the foundation for a second side of the debate over the *Westwerk's* function.[50] Letzner described a ceremony involving three

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[46] For a historigraphical summary of the problem, see Beat Brenk, "Wer sitzt auf der Empore?" in Poeschke, *Sinopien und Stuck,* 71–86. A more in-depth historiographical overview is provided in Schönfeld de Reyes, *Westwerkprobleme,* 48–75.

[47] Alois Fuchs, "Entstehung und Zweckbestimmung der Westwerke," *Westfälische Zeitschrift* 100 (1950): 253, 259. For more bibliography see Schönfeld de Reyes, *Westwerkprobleme,* 56n568.

[48] On the line of the sight from the window, see Felix Kreusch, *Beobachtungen an der Westanlage der Klosterkirche zu Corvey: ein Beitrag zur Frage ihrer Form und Zweckbestimmung* (Cologne: Böhlau,1963), 59–60.

[49] 889. Dodo monachus obiit; et Arnulfus rex venit ad novam Corbeiam. *Annales Corbeienses,* ed. Pertz, *MGH SS* 3, p. 3, ln. 39. On the possibility of a second consecration of the Westwerk in 889, see Krüger, "Zur Geschichte," 58.

[50] Lobbedey, "karolingische Klosterkirche," 166; Johannes Letzner, *Corbeische Chronica Von Ankunfft,*

choirs. One choir, the *supremus chorus*, would stand in the east apse of the basilica and the second, the *chorus angelicus*, would stand at the opposite end, in the upper gallery of the *Westwerk*. The *chorus angelicus*, Letzner further specified, was a young boys' choir (*jungen Knaben*).[51] The *supremus chorus* would sing psalms and liturgical hymns, and the *chorus angelicus* would respond with the *gloria patri*. When the call-and-response between the first two choirs ended, the third choir, the *infimus chorus* standing either in the crossing or in the crypt, would start to sing. At that point, the *chorus angelicus* would leave the *Westwerk* and go to a new position behind the St. Vitus Altar in the east end of the church, where they could see the *infimus chorus* through a small window. There, the *chorus angelicus* would again answer the *infimus chorus* with the *gloria patri*.

As a historian, Letzner is unreliable. He provided no verifiable sources for the scenario he described, and, as a result, what evidence inspired his account remains unclear.[52] Nonetheless, Wilhelm Effmann accepted Letzner's description, because it allowed him to compare Corvey to St-Riquier in Centula, one of the few Carolingian monasteries for which there is a detailed account of the liturgy.[53] Indeed, all arguments about the possible liturgical functions of Corvey's *Westwerk* hinge on analogies with Centula and on Letzner's questionable, early modern account. Working from Hariulf's eleventh-century copy of Angilbert's eighth-century description of Centula's practices,

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Zunemung, Gelegenheit, zu sampt den Gedenckwirdigsten Geschichten des Keyserlichen freyen Stiffts Corbey, […] (Hamburg: 1590), fol. G2r. http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10985688_00005.html.

[51] Letzner, *Corbeische Chronica*, fol. G2r.

[52] Uwe Lobbedey, "Der Herrscher im Kloster: Corvey und die Westwerke: Bemerkungen zum Stand der Forschung in der Frage der Zweckbestimmung," in *Kloster, Pfalz, Klosterpfalz St. Johann in Müstair: historische und archäologische Fragen; Tagung 20. –22. September 2009 in Müstair*, ed. Hans Rudolf Sennhauser (Zurich: Hochschulvlg. an der ETH, 2010), 168–169n44.

[53] Wilhelm Effmann, *Centula – St. Riquier: eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der kirchlichen Baukunst in der Karolingerzeit* (Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1912), 51, 81; idem., *Die Kirche der Abtei Corvey* (Paderborn: Bonifacius, 1929), 129.

Effmann noted that the Easter liturgies at St-Riquier also involved three choirs and that the gallery of the Savior church at the west end of the basilica was also where a choir of young boys from the monastery school stood during these performances.[54] Later, Felix Kreusch interpreted the presence of grafitti — a schematized, bust-length representation of a cowled monk beside a group of miniscule letters scratched on the walls of the upper gallery of Corvey's *Westwerk* — as further evidence in favor of the choir hypothesis, since he saw the letters as a form of early musical notation.[55] The graffiti could have served as a memory aid for the oblate choir singing in the gallery.[56] However, little is known with certainty about the mechanics of performing music in a monastery in the ninth century, much less teaching it.[57] It is unclear whether or not an abstracted form of musical notation would have helped inexperienced singers remember tones. Presumably the boys would have to know how to read musical notation for it to be of any use to them, which implies another form of knowledge that would have had to have been learned in addition to the music itself.

Still, Carol Heitz, who worked extensively and persuasively on the relationship between architecture and the liturgy at St-Riquier, found the comparison between the western Savior's church at Centula and the *Westwerk* at Corvey convincing. Heitz, like Effmann, believed that a boys' choir stood in the gallery of Corvey's *Westwerk* and that,

[54] In Parasceue uero Uigiliae in tribus choris impleantur. Quorum sit unus fratrum coram altare ipsius sancte crucis, alius pueorum in throno sancti Richarii ab occidente, tertius uero infra buticum, hinc et inde, sicut iam supra scriptum est. Hariulf, "Instituto," 7, ed. Hallinger, Wegner, and Frank, *CCM* 1, 294.

[55] Kreusch, *Beobachtungen an der Westanlage*, 53.

[56] P. Michael Hermes, "Sgraffiti in der Westempore des Corveyer Westwerks," in Poeschke, *Sinopien und Stuck*, 112. For a late medieval example of musical grafitti in Parma interpreted as evidence of a choral school see Luigi Parigi, "Una 'Schola Cantorum' Quattro-cinquecentesca nel duomo de Parma," *Rassegna musicale* 25 (1955): 118–122.

[57] Edward Nowacki, "Antiphonal Psalmody in Christian Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *Essays on Medieval Music in Honor of David G. Hughes* ed. Graem Boone (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 291ff.

like many other auxilliary structures at the western ends of early medieval basilicas, the *Westwerk* provided a stage for the performance of rituals related to Easter.[58]

Pushing the comparison with Centula still further, Effmann knew, again from Hariulf's copy of Angilbert's text, that the western end of the basilica at Centula was opened twice a year on Christmas and Easter for the monks to distribute the Eucharist to the laity.[59] He suggested that the *Westwerk* at Corvey also operated as a kind of parish church (*Pfarrkirche*) where the monks and the laity would meet at certain times of the year. Moreover, Effmann asserted that as an extension of its parish functions and its use on Easter, the *Westwerk* was also where baptisms took place at the monastery.[60] To support his argument, Effmann noted that a diploma from 1481, now in the Staatsarchiv in Münster, indicates that in the later Middle Ages, Corvey's *Westwerk* was the location of three weekly masses held before an altar dedicated to John the Baptist.[61] If the

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[58] Heitz, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne*, 56, 152–156; idem., "De la liturgie carolingienne au drame liturgique medieval: repercussions sur l'architecture religieuse du haut Moyen Age et l'époque romane," *Bollettino del Centro internationale di studi di architettura Andrea Palladio* 16 (1974): 75.

[59] In die autem sanctissimo Paschae tam de processione et reliquo officio quam et de missa ita, ut in Natiuitate Domini omnia peragantur. Ordinaui enim, ut in die sanctissimo Paschae et in Natiuate Domini fratres et ceteri omnes, qui in aecclesia sancti Salvatoris ad missam audiendam steterint in eadem aecclesia communionem percipiant. Dum uero fratres uel reliqui clerici ab illo sacerdote, qui ipsa in die missam cantauerit, communicantur, sint duo sacerdotes alii cum duobus diaconibus atque subdiaconibus, quorum unus uiros, alter in eadem aecclesia communicet mulieres, ut clerus et populus simul communicati benedictio/nem siue completionem missae partier possint audire. Qua finita laudantes deum et benedicentes dominum simul egrediantur. Hariulf, "Instituto," 8, ed. Hallinger, Wegner, and Frank, *CCM* 1, 295–296; Effmann, *Centula*, 126, 149; idem., *Abtei Corvey*, 128.

[60] Baptismal fonts occur with some frequency in early medieval monasteries. Sofia Uggè "I battisteri in ambito monastico nella tarda antichità e nell'alto Medioevo," in *L'edificio battesimale in Italia: aspetti e problemi; Atti dell'VIII Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Cristiana, Genova, Sarzana, Albenga, Finale Ligure, Ventimiglia, 21–26 settembre 1998,* ed. Daniela Gandolfi (Bordighera: Istituto Internazionale di Stuci Liguri, 2001), 385–403. Generally speaking, infant baptism was practiced during the Carolingian period, and there was also a push to revive the Early Christian tradition of performing baptisms only on Holy Saturday and Pentecost. However, the specifics of how and when baptism was performed could vary considerably from place to place. See Julia Smith, "Religion and Lay Society," in vol. 2 of *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 656–660.

[61] […] so alse vnse vorfaren vth anreyssinge, begerthen vnd hulpe etlicker frome(n), innighen herthen to troiste vnd salicheydt orer vnd orer fru(n)de vnd aller kristen seyle(n) drey misse alle weken vor de(m)

Westwerk had been used for baptisms from an early period, this might account for the later medieval dedication of an altar to John the Baptist. The arrangement could also be compared to Reims, where Flodoard's *Annales* record that the baptismal font was located on the upper story of the western end of the church.[62]

A problematic but nonetheless thought-provoking piece of archaeological evidence in the floor of the *Westwerk's* second story could support the baptism hypothesis. A basin (50–90 cm long and 60 cm deep) was discovered under a coverplate during the 1959 restoration of the floor, and Lobbedey has cautiously suggested that it could have been a *sacrarium* to hold baptismal waters that would have been blessed as part of the liturgy on Holy Saturday.[63] Francesca dell'Acqua has further argued that the theme of water in the frescoes in the *Westwerk*'s narthex could be linked to baptism.[64] Dell'Acqua's essay is important, as it is the only convincing study to date that relates the *Westwerk's* decorative program to a possible function; the arguments will be discussed further below.

A less satisfying attempt to connect the *Westwerk*'s program to its function has been put forth by Lynda Coon, who identified music rather than baptism as the common

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altare de gewyghet is in de ere sunte Johannes Baptisten vp dem torne in vmse(n) mu(n)ster to Corueye gelegen, dorch unse heren in ewicheyd tho holdende ingesath vnd seck verplichted hebben, […], Staatsarchiv Münster, Corvey, Urkunden Nr. 512 and Abschrift Msc. I, 136, p. 153; quoted in Krüger, "Zur Geschichte," 78.

[62] Anno 976 destruxit Adelbero, nomine non merito archiepiscopus, arcuatum opus, quod erat secus valvas aecclesiae sanctae Mariae Remensis; supra quod altare sancti Salvatoris habebatur, et fontes miro opere erant positi. Flodoard, *Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Saxonici*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz *MGH S* 3 (Hannover: 1839), p. 407, ln. 35; Effmann, *der Abtei Corvey*, 128; Heitz, "De la liturgie carolingienne," 78.

[63] The basin is problematic because it was never formally examined or photographed. Uwe Lobbedey, "Randbemerkungen zu westfälischen Taufanlagen aus archäologischer Sicht," *Westfalen und Italien: Festschrift für Karl Noehles*, ed. Udo Grote (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2002), 52.

[64] Francesca dell'Acqua, "Carlomagno, la conversion dei Sassoni e il Westwerk di Corvey," in *Medioevo letto, scavato, rivalutato: Studi in onore di Paolo Peduto*, ed. Rosa Fiorillo and Chiara Maria Lambert (Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio 2012), 165.

denominator between the *Westwerk's* artistic program and its use. Coon recognized two kinds of singing represented in the *Westwerk*: "the captivating chants of the bestial Siren, which propel men toward the underworld, juxtaposed with godly musical notations, which direct monastic voices toward the heavens."[65] Coon's notion of directionality (toward the underworld or toward heaven) is intriguing and supported spatially, since the mythological frescoes occur on the main floor of the atrium while the graffiti are up in the gallery. Nonetheless, the rest of her argument, what she calls an "erotic reading of the space," is less credible:

> The spatial setting of this lyrical fusion is a charged one, because the westwork was the place where monastic and lay elites assembled together. As such, the monks undoubtedly associated the disruptive presence of the laity with the worldly temptations personified by the Siren's song. Like the Siren, monks under fifteen were objects of adult male desire, and their presence in the choir, suggested by musical notations, intensifies the erotic reading of the space.
>
> During solemn liturgical events, the Corvey westwork housed a variety of Dark Age corporeal styles: the meat-eating laity, skilled monastic orators, and inexpert young chanters. Visiting women would have found their strongest and most negative association with the monstrous female figures of Scylla and the seductive Siren. At Corvey, indecent singing (the Siren's song) and inexperienced singing (the reedy chants of oblates) test the corporeal resolve of Christ's virile orators, personified here by the martial Ulysses, whose body – bound as it is to a ship's mast – personifies the Crucified One in the works of the early biblical exegetes. The goal of the monastic enterprise can be read in this one anxiety-provoking space: the constant (and constantly erotic) struggle to move the monk from the place of man, which is 'in the body,' to the realm of God which is 'in the voice.'[66]

Coon's easy equation of sirens with young boys as objects of adult male desire is too casual to be convincing, as well as being self-contradictory, since it undermines her earlier point about the sirens' and the boys' singing belonging to two different categories of infernal and heavenly song. She also took for granted that there was once a

[65] Lynda Coon, *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 141.

[66] Ibid., 141–143.

representation of Odysseus tied to the mast next to the Siren, a claim for which there is no surviving physical evidence.[67] She further assumed that female visitors would instinctively identify with representations of female monsters, without mentioning the male centaur or naked male riders on dolphins depicted alongside Scylla and the Siren or the more positive representation of veiled female figures in stucco in the atrium. Ultimately, Coon's reading of the *Westwerk* as an "anxiety-provoking" space feels forced.

When considering how Corvey's *Westwerk* might have been used, it is important to remember that the structure was a later addition to a preexisting church; construction on it was begun decades after the initial basilica was completed. The *Westwerk* was an interpolation into the monastic complex at Corvey, and so whatever purposes the structure served, they were not part of the how the early abbey initially operated when the first church was consecrated in 844. Suggesting a liturgical use for the *Westwerk* necessarily implies a restructuring or translocation of liturgical practices at Corvey in the 870s–880s under abbots Adalgar (856–877) and Bovo I (879–890) under whose direction the structure was built.[68] For example, if the *Westwerk's* gallery was a stage for a boys' choir on Easter, then the Easter liturgy at Corvey must have been very different before the *Westwerk* was built to provide a space for this kind of performance. If the *Westwerk* was used for baptism, then either the abbey at Corvey did not perform baptisms before

[67] Claussen thought it likely that there was Odysseus tied to the mast, but this was based on literary evidence, not archaeological evidence. Hilde Claussen, "Odysseus und Herkules in der karolingischen Kunst, I: Odysseus und 'das grausige Meer dieser Welt': zu ikonographischen Tradition der karolingischen Wandmalerei in Corvey," in *Iconologia sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst, und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas: Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. by Hagen Keller and Nikolaus Staubach (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1994), 348, 372.

[68] Between them, Adalgar's immediate successors, Thankmar and Avo, only ran the abbey for two years from 877–879. Their roles in the construction of the Westwerk were probably minimal.

the 880s or else they took place at some other, as yet unidentified, site within the abbey.[69] Such changes would have to have been historically motivated. Unfortunately, no early medieval documentation survives that describes the liturgy at Corvey, either before or after the construction of the *Westwerk*, or otherwise explicitly accounts for such hypothetical changes.

However, it is known that in 870 lighting struck the east end of the basilica, causing a fire and necessitating the reconstruction of the choir between 870–873. The campaign transformed the eastern end of the church from a rectangular shape to a curved apse and added a side annex, three new chapels with altars, and an outer crypt.[70] Construction on the *Westwerk* then began in 873, shortly after the repairs to the east end were completed.[71] The reconstruction and expansion of the east end of the basilica and the new construction at the west end may have been conceived of as pendant projects. The *Westwerk* could have been built, not in answer to any pressing liturgical need, but as part of a larger campaign that responded to the accidental destruction of the east end of the church. The 870 fire could have provided the necessary excuse to expand and improve the basilica overall, including the addition of the *Westwerk*.

The fact that the *Westwerk* provided the abbey church with a striking new façade should not be underestimated. The structure is four stories tall, not counting the corner towers, which are higher still. It would have entirely blocked the view of the Carolingian basilica behind it. Building the *Westwerk* must have been motivated to some extent by a desire to impress visitors. As a visually arresting, monumental entrance to the church, it

[69] Lobbedey, "westfälische Taufanlagen," 53.

[70] Lobbedey, "karolingische Klosterkirche," 164.

[71] Krüger, "Zur Geschichte," 57.

raised the prestige of the abbey, which was gaining prominence as a royal *Memorialstiftung* in the last quarter of the ninth century. Between 870 and 887, Corvey received five large donations from five separate royal donors, in exchange for the monks' prayers for members of the Carolingian royal family, both living and dead.[72] The end of the ninth century was, therefore, a key moment in Corvey's development as an institution with royal ties, and the *Westwerk* could have served, in part, as a visual expression of the monastery's growing importance during the period.[73]

The Identities of the Stucco Figures

One of the most interesting aspects of the stucco reliefs at Corvey is the absence of a feature; all six figures lack haloes. The underdrawings do not demarcate spaces for nimbi, nor are any of the surviving fragments shaped in a way that makes them easily identifiable as such. Given the incomplete nature of the reliefs it is, of course, possible that this is an accident of preservation. However, the absence in the underdrawings is a compelling reason to think that the stucco figures never had haloes. The drawings are meticulous in many ways. They distinguish between fine details like folds in and layers of clothing, and they also indicate that each figure was depicted standing on top of a short, fictive platform, seemingly set directly ontop of the cornices of the piers [Fig. 86].[74] It is improbable that the drawings would be so detailed in these respects and yet omit a feature as important as a halo.

It is possible that the haloes were omitted from the drawings because they were

[72] Karl Heinrich Krüger, "Hochgestellte Persönlichkeiten in der Corveyer Memoria," in Poeschke, *Sinopien und Stuck*, 101.

[73] Gianluigi Ciotta, *La cultura architettonica carolingia: Da Pipino III a Carlo il Grosso (751–888)* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2010), 255.

[74] Claussen, "Sinopien und Stuck," 10.

initially painted onto the walls behind the figures' heads, not sculpted in relief. However, this hypothesis is also unlikely, since painted haloes for stucco figures would go against convention. Early medieval stuccoworkers invariably rendered haloes in three-dimensional relief, as demonstrated by examples from the eighth to the tenth centuries. The female saints in Cividale as well as the two stucco Virgin and Child sculptures in Brescia, are sculpted with substantial, three-dimensional haloes behind their heads [see Figs. 58 and 66]. Closer to the date of the *Westwerk*, the Carolingian stucco tympana in Hildesheim also have sculpted haloes [see Fig. 55]. The same is true of a tenth-century tondo in Milan depicting St. Ambrose from the church of San Ambrosio, currently in the collection of the Museo Diocesano Milano [see Fig. 8]. In the Milan example, the gold foil on top of the halo is a thirteenth-century addition, but the underlying, volumetric halo itself is original to the tenth century. For these reasons, if haloes had existed at Corvey, they would have been sculpted, and one could reasonably expect this sculpted component to be reflected in the underdrawings. Therefore, it is unlikely that the stucco reliefs represent saints.

Who or what the reliefs are supposed to represent remains unclear.[75] The fact that each of the male figures is dressed in a chlamys and tunic has led to comparisons with such depictions of Carolingian lords as the donor portrait in the small church of San Benedetto in Malles [Fig. 87]. This has opened up the possibility that the male figures represent secular donors. Karl Heinrich Krüger has suggested that they could even be linked to royal donors listed in Corvey's *memoria*.[76] Still, as Joachim Poeschke has

[75] Joachim Poeschke, "Herrscher oder Heilige? Zur Deutung der Sinopien von Corvey," in Poeschke, *Sinopien und Stuck*, 54–55; Krüger, "Hochgestellte Persönlichkeiten," 101.

[76] Krüger, "Hochgestellte Persönlichkeiten," 101.

pointed out, the iconic frontality of the figures seems better suited to representations of saints than donors, who are more often depicted turning to the side, as at Malles.[77] Poeschke did not believe that the absence of haloes precludes the possibility that the figures are saints, especially since four military saints, Mercurius, Vitus, Stephan, and Justinus, were venerated at Corvey, though Justinus's relics did not arrive on site until after 891 after the *Westwerk* was completed.[78]

The identities of the female figures are equally uncertain. Claussen compared them to such representations as the veiled female saints in the *Tempietto Longobardo*, the female personifications of virtues or of Ecclesia in late Carolingian ivories and manuscripts, and the portrait of Queen Richildis in the San Paolo Bible.[79]

I argue that the ambiguity of the stucco figures in the *Westwerk* was deliberate. The reliefs represented neither saints nor specific historical individuals. Rather they depict general categories: pious women and Christian soldiers (*milites Christi*). The representations were left indeterminate enough so that when viewers saw them, the reliefs could call to mind either saints whose relics were venerated in the main church or historical figures, such as pious donors commemorated in monastic *memoria*. In this way, the stucco reliefs invite a conflation between persons who lived in recent history and those from the distant hagiographical past. An analogous impulse to elide the difference between recent history and the hagiographical past is apparent in literature

[77] Poeschke, "Herrscher oder Heilige?" 57.

[78] Ibid., 55.

[79] Claussen, "Sinopien und Stuckfragmente," 13. In a later context, female personifications of virtues modeled in stucco occur on the spandrels of the south aisle of St. Michael's in Hildesheim. Michael Brandt, "Zur Stuckdekoration der Hildesheimer Michaeliskirche – vor 1186," in Hoernes, *Hoch- und spätmittelalterlicher Stuck*, 99.

produced in Saxony in the ninth century, and these texts are helpful for understanding the stucco reliefs in the *Westwerk*.

Saints in Carolingian Saxony

In her work on Carolingian hagiography and sanctity, Julia Smith pointed out that, while Carolingian authors wrote prolifically about Late Antique saints, relatively few new saints emerged in the Carolingian period itself.[80] Carolingian hagiographers "preferred to ascribe sanctity to those who were long since dead" rather than to credit their living or recently deceased contemporaries with it.[81] One exception to the rule is the hagiographical tradition in Saxony, a region where the local population was newly converted to Christianity.[82] In such an environment, the invention of new Saxon saints of whom locals could feel proud was an important proseltyzing tool.[83]

The need for specifically Saxon saints resulted in the development of an innovative literary genre that, as Frederick Paxton described it, blends biography and hagiography.[84] Three such hagiographical biographies about persons directly connected to Corvey were written during the ninth century: Paschasius Radbertus' *Vita Adalhardi*

[80] Julia Smith, "The Problem of Female Sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780–920," in *Past & Present* 146 (1995): 3.

[81] Ibid., 3–4.

[82] Ibid., 8.

[83] Ibid.; Ian N. Wood, "Missionary Hagiography in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), 199. For another example of the invention of new saints as part of a mission-minded culture see the example of the invention of Bavarian saints in the mid-eighth century. Jonathan Couser, "A Usable Past: Early Bavarian Hagiography in Context," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 19, no. 4 (2007): 1–56.

[84] Frederick S. Paxton (trans.), *Anchoress and Abbess in Ninth-Century Saxony: The* Lives *of Liutbirga of Wedhausen and Hathumoda of Gandersheim* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2009), 5.

and *Epitaphium Arsenii* and Agius of Corvey's *Vita Hathumodae*.[85] The first two texts are biographies of Corvey's founders, the half-brothers Adalhard and Wala. Paschasius was a friend and contemporary of Adalhard and Wala as well as being Adalhard's successor as the abbot of Corbie, Corvey's mother house. He wrote the *Vita Adalhardi* after Adalhard's death in 826 and the first book of the *Epitaphium Arsenii* (Arsenius being a pseudonym for Wala) after Wala's death in 836.[86] Agius of Corvey's *Vita Hathumodae* was written at the same time that the *Westwerk* was being built, shortly after the death of the abbess of Gandersheim, Hathumoda, in 874. Agius was a monk at Corvey, a priest for the cloister at Gandersheim, and may have been a relative — either a brother or an uncle — of Hathumoda herself.[87] Like Paschasisus, Agius had personally known the woman whose biography he wrote. Agius may also have modeled the *Vita Hathumodae* after Paschasius' biography for Adalhard, since both the *Vita Hathumodae* and the *Vita Adalhardi* adopt a similar format: prose lives concluding with poetic

[85] Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita s. Adalhardi abbatis Corbeiensis,* ed. J.P. Migne, *PL* 120 (Paris: 1852); idem., *Epitaphium Arsenii,* ed. Ernst Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Phil.-hist. Classe* (Berlin: Reimer in Comm, 1900); Agius of Corvey, *Vita Hathumodae abbatissae Gandersheimensis*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH SS* 4 (Hannover: 1841).

[86] Krüger, "Zur Geschichte," 22; The second book of the *Epitaphium Arsenii* was written later, perhaps as late as 856. David Ganz, "The '*Epitaphium Arsenii*' and the Opposition to Louis the Pious," in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (New York: Clarendon Press, 1990), 539; Mayke de Jong, "Paschasius Radbertus and Pseudo-Isidore: The Evidence of the *Epitaphium Arsenii*," in Garver and Phelan, *Rome and Religion,* 149–151.

[87] Paxton, *Anchoress and Abbess*, 22.

dialogues.[88] The *Epitaphium Arsenii* has a different structure, taking the form of a dialogue between six interlocutors discussing Wala's life.[89]

It is significant that in both their biographies, Wala and Hathumoda are identified as being half Saxon, Wala on his mother's side and Hathumoda on her father's. Of Wala, Paschasius wrote: "I wish this in particular for the sake of our brothers dwelling in Saxony – he was of that people – so that they may know fully what great founders of the faith they had."[90] Agius observed that Hathumoda's "father, descended from the most illustrious of Saxon families, was duke of the East Saxons; her mother, descending from the equally noble stock of the Franks, glittered all the more nobly through her child."[91] By identifying Wala and Hathumoda as Saxons, their biographies illustrate the urge to cultivate a tradition of local Christian heroes in a region where Christianity was still a relatively new religion.

The *Vita Adalhardi, Epitaphium Arsenii,* and *Vita Hathumodae* portray local protagonists at Corvey and Gandersheim as modern saints. The texts communicate idiosyncratic information about the deceased while at the same time employing familiar conventions from hagiographical writing to make them appear transcendentally holy.

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[88] Ibid., 25. David Ganz has suggested that Paschasius' biography of Wala, at least, was not written with the intention of circulating it beyond Corbie. However, ties between Corbie and Corvey remained strong throughout the ninth century, and Agius of Corvey's awareness of the life of Adalhard seems to suggest that members of the monastic community at Corvey were at least familiar with Paschasius' biography of Adalhard. Ganz, "The '*Epitaphium Arsenii,*'" 538–540.

[89] David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance*, Beihefte der Francia 20 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 113.

[90] Novimus haec omnia, sed quomodo conversatus sit sub Antonio nostro, velim edicas, maxime pro fratribus nostris Saxonia degentibus, quorum fuit ex genere, ut sciant ad plenum quales habuerint fidei suae fundatores. Paschasius, *Epitaphium*, 1.12.1, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 40; trans. Allen Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins: Contemporary Lives of Adalard and Wala* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1967), 116.

[91] Pater eius ex illustrissimo Saxonum genere oriundus, dux Orientalium Saxonum fuit; mater ex nobilissima aeque Francorum prosapia descendens, in prole nobilior effulsit. Agius, *Vita Hathumodae*, 2.13, ed. Pertz, *MGH SS* 4, 167; trans. Paxton, *Anchoress and Abbess*, 120.

However, since Adalhard, Wala, and Hathumoda performed no miracles in their lives, their biographies emphasize a generic kind of sanctity over specific events.

For example, Adalhard's and Wala's virtues are the main focus of Paschasius' accounts.[92] While the two works unfold in general terms according to events in the lives of their subjects, the chronology in the texts can be difficult to follow, since the texts offer the reader character sketches, describing in excruciatingly repetitive detail each of the abundant virtues exhibited by the two founders. As Paschasius described the project, he provided "a picture of this man's character, … not … fully fashioned from the face of one person, for by his actions he displayed the worth of many illustrious men."[93] He used the analogy of the antique story of Zeuxis painting an ideally beautiful woman from five models to describe the spiritual beauty of both Adalhard and Wala. For Adalhard, he wrote,

> The painter chose five whose fine form he judged to be beautiful. He did not believe that everything they thought lovely could be found in one body Nature has not completely polished anything perfect in all its parts in a single example; it would not have anything to bestow upon others if it granted everything to one… From all those he chose them whom he could understand as the five virgins who ceaselessly trim their lamps with holy oil of charity and prepare to go forth to meet the bridegroom and bride.[94]

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[92] Ganz, *Corbie*, 103–104.

[93] Sed huius non unius ex vultu plene formabitur, reor, morum imago, qui gessit suis in actibus multorum inlustrium probitatem. Paschasius, *Epitaphium*, 1.1.10, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 20; trans. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins,* 85.

[94] Quod illi obtemperantes, pictor quinque delegit, quarum formam suo probavit judicio pulchritudinis esse. Neque enim putavit omnia quae quaereret ad venustatem uno se in corpore reperire posse, eo quod nihil simplici in genere omnibus ex partibus perfectum natura expolivit, tanquam caeteris non sit habitura quid largiatur, si uni cuncta concesserit… Elegit tamen ex omnibus quos potuit intelligere quinque virgines, quae pio charitatis oleo suas indesinenter ornant lampadas, et parant exire obviam sponso et sponsae. Paschasius, *Vita Adalhardi,* 20.2–21, ed. Migne, *PL* 120, col. 1519A–B; trans. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins,* 38–39.

Like Zeuxis selecting and recombining the best attributes from multiple models, Adalhard "did one thing characteristic of Gregory, but another of blessed Silvester."[95] Recycling the analogy for Wala's obituary, Paschasius began by stating that another monk at Corbie had proposed that

> in the manner of Zeuxis I depict as a memorial for the ages a representation of the character of our Arsenius. He does not think it enough that I, unworthy artist, am afraid to appear even more unworthy by giving through the medium of letters an image of a man so great, so renowned for his virtuous ornaments.[96]

For this reason, the biographies of Adalhard and Wala read at times more like cobbled together lists of attributes gathered from past exemplars rather than chronological accounts of two recent lives. Even though Adalhard and Wala were not Early Christian saints and had only died in recent years, they nonetheless displayed all the same virtues of saints from earlier centuries.

The *Vita Hathumodae* also interjects long passages describing Hathumoda's general virtues into the story. Describing Hathumoda's reaction to her teachers at Herford, Agius offers a portrait that is reminiscient of Paschasius'.

> She remembered the appearance and features of each and every one and recalled the character of all before her eyes. She praised the charity of this one, the humility of that. She noted how one was preeminent in obedience, another in patience. She admired generosity in one, abstinence in another, but she proclaimed the piety, modesty, and chastity of all in common.[97]

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[95] agebat namque istud Gregorii, aliud vero beati Silvestri. Ibid., 20.22, ed. ibid., col. 1519B; trans. ibid., 39.

[96] Quid novi acciderit Adeodati nostri, quod rursus iuxta illud Maronis, te ortante, ut reor, infandos iubet renovare Dolores et rogat Arsenii nostril morum liniamentis imaginem saeculis in memoriam more Zeuxi pingere. Nec satis igitur cogitate, quod confundor fedus pictor iconiam tanti viri suis virtutum floribus gloriosam, litterarum in speculo posteris, ne fedior appearem exhibere. Paschasius, *Epitaphium*, 1.1.1, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 18–19; trans. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins,* 83.

[97] Recordabatur quippe facies et vultus singularum, et omnium mores ante oculos revocabat; huius caritatem, eius humilitatem laudabat; illam obedientia praeire, hanc patientia praestare dicebat; in una largitatem, in altera abstinentiam mirabatur; omnium vero in commune modestiam pietatem atque pudicitiam praedicabat. Agius, *Vita Hathumodae*, 3.4, ed. Pertz, *MGH SS* 4, 168; trans. Paxton, *Anchoress and Abbess*, 122.

The result is a biographical account of a contemporary figure who was the culmination of earlier archetypes.

The tendency to combine hagiography and recent biography in literature linked to Corvey in the ninth century offers a way to understand the ambiguous identities of the stucco figures in the *Westwerk*. The biographies of Adalhard, Wala, and Hathumoda blur distinctions between the distant past and recent events in order to insert the recent Christian tradition in Saxony into a deeper Christian history. In the Corvey stucco reliefs, the question of whether the figures are intended as representations of saints or as historical persons accomplishes a similar goal. By presenting viewers with generic categories of pious women and *milites Christi* to which either Early Christian saints or contemporary Carolingians could belong, the stucco figures facilitate a conceptual convergence between the distant past and Corvey's recent history. Such a message would have been particularly relevant in ninth-century Saxony, where it was necessary to construct a history for the new churches and monastic institutions established in the region following the Carolingian conquest.

The Invocation of Classical Antiquity in Carolingian Saxony

Along with the conspicuous absence of haloes, a second meaningful visual feature of the Corvey reliefs is, as Sapin observed, the relationship between the figures and their architectural setting. Corvey's *Westwerk* is an unusual early example of a medieval site where the spandrels of an arcade have full-length figures in them. Poeschke pointed out that, with the exception of the *Westwerk*, the earliest full-length figures to occur in arcade spandrels in the West date to the eleventh century.[98] In earlier buildings, complete

[98] Poeschke, "Herrscher oder Heilige?" 51–52.

figures occurred in the highest registers, while ground-floor arcades were reserved for clipeate portraits. In both apostolic basilicas, Old St. Peter's and San Paolo fuori le mura, for example, full-length figures stood between the windows in the clerestory, but the spandrels of the arcades were reserved for bust-length portraits in roundels [see Fig. 37]. The practice was picked up at later sites, like San Salvatore in Brescia and Sankt Georg in Reichenau-Oberzell [Fig. 88].

The question then becomes: what was gained at Corvey by departing from precedent and placing full-length figures in the spandrels instead of truncated figures in medallions? With clipeate portraits, the images are set off from their surroundings by frames. In contrast, the full-length figures at Corvey would have inhabited their surroundings more fully. The cornices of the piers, painted in bright red, yellow, green, and blue, would have been visually prominent, strenghtening the impression that the figures were standing on substantial ledges. The fact that the six reliefs were separated from each other, each on its own pier, would have also contributed to the sense that that the reliefs were autonomous statues on plinths. Finally, the choice of medium also augments this effect. The Corvey stuccoes effectively simulated the appearance of three-dimensional statues because they were literally three-dimensional forms, albeit not executed fully in-the-round.

The motif of a statue standing on a base was charged with meaning in the Carolingian period, since pedestals could be used as visual shorthand for pagan idols. This usage occurs in the Stuttgart Psalter (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. bibl. fol. 23) and Bern *Psychomachia* (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 264), where

idols are represented on top of isolated, free-standing columns [Fig. 89].[99] Elevating a nude human figure on top of a base in this manner was a device Carolingian illustrators could use to signal to viewers that they were looking at representation of a statue and a scene from the pre-Christian or Early Christian past. Moreover, although Roman ruins in the area immediately around Corvey are limited, the makers of the *Westwerk* stuccoes could have seen the motif of a statue on a pedestal on Roman military and funerary monuments in neighboring regions. For example, a victory monument from Nijmegen, depicts a toga-clad Roman performing a sacrifice to Tiberius Caesar [Fig. 90]. The statue stands on a square plinth, which supplies the emperor's name in an inscription on the front. Similarly, the cenotaph of Marcus Caelius, found in Birten near Xanten, also depicts the heads of two freedmen on plinths flanking the deceased soldier [Fig. 91]. Either through the circulation of Carolingian images that represented the distant, pre-Christian past or through direct observation of ancient monuments, the motif would have carried connotations of antiquity in the imaginations of the learned ninth-century viewers of the *Westwerk*.

The inlaid ivory plaques on the front of the *Cathedra Petri* (ca. 875/876) offer a contemporary example of another Carolingian work of art where a medium was deliberately chosen for the antique valences it carried [Fig. 92]. The ivories, which depict the Labors of Hercules and a variety of hybrid monsters, were executed in an inlaid technique, an art form that Lawrence Nees has argued was associated most closely "with ancient subject matter, rather than Christian."[100] In contrast, the ivory elements on the back of the *Cathedra Petri* represent, among other subjects, a portrait of Charles the

[99] Fricke, *Ecce Fides*, 89–99.

[100] Nees, *Tainted Mantle*, 201.

Bald receiving crowns from angels; these scenes were carved in shallow relief. The difference in techniques — inlay vs. relief — articulated the difference between the ancient pagan subject matter on the front of the throne and the contemporary Christian/Carolingian subject matter on the back.[101] Yet, the relationship between form and content in Corvey's stucco reliefs differs from that in the Hercules ivories. With the ivories, it is a mutually reinforcing correlation; the antique form matches the antique content. At Corvey, the medium's resemblance to classical statues seems at odds with the Christian content of the reliefs.

Paschasius' biographies of Corvey's founders again provide a way of understanding why the stucco figures in the *Westwerk* seem to tap into antique visual formulas. The biographies not only present the recent Carolingian past in hagiographical terms, but they also intersperse classical and biblical anecdotes between hagiographical and biographical information. For example, in the Zeuxis passage in the *Vita Adalhardi*, Paschasius combined the classical story of Zeuxis with the biblical parable of the five wise Virgins, and Late Antique saints, Gregory and Silvester. In this way, Adalhard is portrayed as the culmination of multiple histories: the classical (Zeuxis), the biblical (the five wise virgins) and the hagiographical (Gregory and Silvester). Elsewhere, Paschasius cited Plato alongside the Old Testament account of Daniel to expound on Adalhard's relationship with Louis the Pious.[102] He quoted Horace and Virgil in conjunction with Psalm 83 (84) to describe how Wala was made more perfect by enduring worldly

[101] Ibid.

[102] Jam enim annosa perversorum improbitas, juxta illud Platonis, beatas et felices respublicas esse ingemiscebat, si eas studiosi sapientiae regerent, vel si earum rectores studere sapientiam contigisset. Unde dolo accensi atque invidia, excogitaverunt quomodo ac si Danielem ex regis latere amoverent ut justitia ulterius non habendo defensorem statum amitteret. Paschasius, *Vita Adalhardi,* 30.1–2, ed. Migne, *PL* 120, col. 1523B.

trials.[103] By far the most striking use of antique literary traditions in the biographies is the fact that the overarching structures of both follow antique formats.[104] The *Vita Adalhardi* is organized as a Late Antique funerary oration.[105] The *Epitaphium Arsenii* is a dialogue, which was, according to David Ganz, a format used by Christian writers in Late Antiquity "to imitate the model of Ciceronian exposition."[106] Therefore, Late Antique literary structures mediate biblical, hagiographical, and biographical content.

Paschasius' appropriation of antique formats serves a purpose similar to his use of conventional hagiogiographic tropes; it imbues Adalhard and Wala's biographies with the semblance of a historical pedigree in spite of the recent nature of the content of the texts. The literary structures negotiate and transform the information conveyed, making the lives of Adalhard and Wala seem more venerable by association. Likewise, the medium of stucco relief negotiates and transforms the pictorial content of the figures at Corvey, allowing the figures to evoke an older tradition. This association does not mean that the

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[103] Si quaeris, Adeodate, qualis venerit, fateor talis qualem Virgilius ille tuus Maro describit, *totus teres atque rotundus*. Qui nimirum versus, licet in Virgilio vestro magnis extollatur laudibus, longe antiquior legitur in Oratio, qui dum de viro sapiente loqueretur, ait, quod sit fortis, et in seipso totus teres atque rotundus. […] Unde in comparatione Dei, sicut nemo bonus, ita nemo perfectus; et sicut nemo perfectus, ita nemo teres seu rotundus. Tamen dicitur et bonus, et perfectus homo: et si perfectus, utique teres, quia in Christo conformatur, in cujus nimirum circuitu iris esse legitur, ex quo omnis perfectio virtutum designatur. Caeterum nemo proficit ad ista, qui se quotidie major meliorque non invenitur. Hinc quoque propheta: *Beatus vir,* inquit, *cujus est auxilium abs te, ascensiones in corde suo disposuit*. Quid sit autem ascensiones disponere, subjungit de singulis: *Et ibunt,* inquit, *de virtute in virtutem.* Ita ut omnium virtutum forma, propria cujusque charitas efficiat animae quantitatem aut qualitatem. Paschasius, *Epitaphium*, 1.9.2, 1.9.7, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 34–35.

[104] For a reconsideration of the uses and transformations of antique literary forms in Carolingian literature, see James Whitta, "Ille ego Naso: Modoin of Autun's Eclogues and the 'Renouatio' of Ovid," *Latomus* 61, no. 3 (2002), 703–731.

[105] Quapropter officiosissimum est, sicut dixi, sanctos imitari viros, videlicet praefatum Ambrosium, et beatum Hieronymum, reliquosque sacros imitabiles viros, qui suis epitaphia charis facundissime condiderunt. Paschasius, *Vita Adalhardi,*1.2, ed. Migne, *PL* 120, col. 1509A; Ganz, *Corbie*, 103.

[106] Ganz further clarifies that dialogue was a literary form that allowed conflicting views to be presented; this was important for the Life of Wala, since Wala was politically controversial, having participated in two rebellions. Paschasius wanted to "both to justify his friend and abbot, and to explain what had gone wrong." Ganz, *Corbie*, 112–114.

Corvey reliefs were intended to trigger thoughts of pagan idols, any more than the biographies of Adalhard and Wala were supposed to be mistaken for antique texts written by pagan authors.[107] By imitating statues on plinths, the makers of the reliefs borrowed a visual idiom that enabled them to endow a new monument with a sense of history. The gilded inscription on the exterior of the *Westwerk* further supports the idea that the monument allowed the monastic community at Corvey to position their relatively young foundation in an imagined deeper history.

Corvey as a New Rome: The Inscription

The Corvey inscription likely dates to the time of the original basilica at the monastery, which was begun in 822 and consecrated in 844 [see Fig. 73]. Again, the text reads: *CIVITATEM ISTAM TV CIRCVMDA D(omine) ET ANGELI TVI CVSTODIANT MVROS EIVS.* One side of its frame is damaged, suggesting that the plaque was recycled from an earlier context. Moreover, pieces of mangled, metal letters were found during excavations of the floor of the Corvey's outer crypt, which was begun around 870, giving the letters a rough *terminus ante quem* of that year.[108] The letters testify to the presence of gilded inscriptions at Corvey even before the *Westwerk* was begun in 873. The damaged frame and the discovery of the buried letters led Lobbedey to speculate that the front of the *Westwerk* was a secondary location for the Civitatem plaque, that the

[107] Beate Fricke has, however, argued that representations of pagan idols were important counterparts to representations of Christian holy figures in the Carolingian period. Early medieval image theorists in the West frequently defined what subjects were worthy of Christian veneration by invoking subjects that were not worthy of such veneration, specifically mute, insensate idols. Fricke's most compelling example of this phenomenon is an account of the deacon Vulfilaic in Gregory of Tour's *History of the Franks*, who neutralized an idol of Diana by becoming a stylite saint, essentially turning himself into a living image on a column to counteract the influence of the lifeless, pagan statue. Fricke, *Ecce Fides*, 67.

[108] Uwe Lobbedey, "VIII.52 Inschrifttafel vom Westwerk in Corvey" and "VIII.53 Vergoldeter Buchstabe einer Inschrift," in Stiegemann and Wemhoff, vol. 2 of *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, 570–572; Kristina Krüger, "Metalbuchstaben," in Gai, Krüger, and Their, *Geschichte und Archäologie*, 438–440.

inscription had initially been part of the original basilica but was later repurposed for the *Westwerk's* façade.

The inscription's entreaty to "shelter this city, Lord" and to have "angels watch over its walls," classifies the monastery at Corvey as a walled city like the heavenly cities in Ezekiel and Revelation.[109] Since early in its history, then, the monastery at Corvey was imagined as a kind of heavenly city, and this concept was perpetuated at a later moment by the reuse of the Civitatem plaque on the *Westwerk*. Günter Bandmann has further compared the architectural form of a towered *Westwerk* to civic architecture, particularly a city gate used as a synecdoche for an entire city. In this way, the church building was visually likened to a city; a single, specific church was cast allegorically as the *civitas Dei* or *nova Jerusalem.*[110]

Although the content of the Civitatem inscription is Christian, the form is antique. The words are written in *capitalis quadrata*, and the fact that the letters are made from gilded metal inset in stone is also a return to antique forms. Gilded inscriptions on the exterior of buildings are rare in the early Middle Ages. Apart from the plaque at Corvey, evidence of only two other metal architectural inscriptions has survived from the period. Both come from Lombard south Italy: the palatine chapel of the Lombard duke, Arichis

[109] Ez. 40:2; Rev. 21:16.

[110] Noël Duval has also argued that in Late Antique floor mosaics, representations of a single temple or basilica, usually the most important cult building in a city, could stand, *pars pro toto* for the entire city. In this way, one building (the *ecclesia*) symbolized a much larger location. That the Carolingians had some awareness of the Late Antique symbolic use of architecture is supported by the presence of schematic representations of buildings in manuscripts like the Utrecht Psalter. Günter Bandmann, *Early Medieval Architecture as Bearer of Meaning*, trans. Kendall Wallis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 118; Noël Duval, "L'iconographie architecturale dans les mosaïques de Jordanie," in *Actes de la journée d'études sur Les Eglises de Jordanie et leurs mosaiques: organisée à la occasion de l'inauguration de l'exposition "Mosaiques Byzantine de Jordanie" au musée de la Civilisation gallo-romaine à Lyon en avril 1989,* ed. Noël Duval (Beyrouth: Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, 2003), 211–286.

(r. 758–787), in Salerno and the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno (ca. 808).[111] Conversely, gilded inscriptions were common on the exteriors of Roman monuments. Therefore, while the content of the Civitatem inscription describes an ideal, Christian city, the form recalls ancient, civic monuments. The plaque converts antique forms to a Christian use, and in this way, the heavenly city adopts the visual language of the earthly city of ancient Rome.

A description of Corvey in the *Epitaphium Arsenii* offers a useful gloss for the inscription.[112] Referring to the fact that Adalhard and Wala were half-brothers, Paschasius imagined the pair as a more spiritually minded Romulus and Remus.

> Rome was built in one manner by two brothers; new Rome [Corvey] was built in another manner from our name. The former was erected carnally in the earth; the latter to be spiritually enlarged in heaven. The former was built to subdue nations under its dominion; the latter, to extricate its own from the world. The former was constructed to grow in wealth and in abundance of riches; the latter, to have its foundation in heaven, rich with blessed poverty. The former, founded in blood, increased in wealth by bloody wars; the latter, loving spiritually the poverty of the present life, grew rich in heavenly matters.[113]

[111] Angelo Pantoni, "Due iscrizioni di S. Vincenzo al Volturno e il loro contributo alla storia del cenobio," *Samnium* 35 (1962): 74–84; Mitchell, "The Display of Script," 896. A tomb inscription for Adelberga from Tours (ca. 830) offers a third, non-architectural example of a metal inscription, executed in lead. Krüger, "Metalbuchstaben," 440.

[112] Krüger, "Zur Geschichte," 22.

[113] Ut audio, aliter aedificata est Roma a duobus fratribus, et aliter nova nostro de nomine. Illa siquidem carnaliter in terris, ista spiritaliter, ut dilataretur in caelis; illa ut edomaret gentes sub suo imperio, ista ut extraheret suos de mundo: illa ut cresceret rebus et ditaretur rerum copiis, ista vero ut beata paupertate locuples fundamentum haberet in caelis. Illa itaque a sanguine coepit edificari et cum sanguine rebus bellicis crevit; ista ut paupertatem amaret presentis vitae in spiritu et ditaretur in celestibus. Paschasius, *Epitaphium*, 1.18.1, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 47; trans. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins*, 126.

Paschasisus's binary between the earthly city, Rome, and the heavenly city, Corvey, was inspired by Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*.[114] Augustine famously divided humanity into two opposing groups,

> the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God. And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil.[115]

In the present world (*saeculum*), Augustine wrote that the populations of the earthly and heavenly cities were "commingled, and as it were entangled together."[116] They lived side-by-side and would only become separated at the end of time.

The connection between Paschasius's description of Corvey and *De Civitate Dei* is clearest in a passage where Augustine drew a parallel between the mystical, earthly city and the historical city of Rome by associating a pair of fratricidal brothers with the founding of each. Augustine identified Cain who killed his brother Abel as the original founder of the earthly city and Romulus who killed his brother Remus as the founder of Rome. Since Rome was "destined to reign over so many nations, and be the head of this earthly city of which we speak," it was only appropriate that the same crime, fratricide,

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[114] A sixth-century copy of *De Civitate Dei* was held at Paschasius's home monastery of Corbie. Michael Gorman, "A Survey of the Oldest Manuscripts of St. Augustine's 'De Civitate Dei,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982): 398–410.

[115] unum eorum, qui secundum hominem, alterum eorum, qui secundum deum uiuunt; quas etiam mystice appellamus ciuitates duas, hoc est duas societates hominum, quarum est una quae praedestinata est in aeternum regnare cum deo, altera aeternum supplicium subire cum diabolo. Augustine, *De civitate Dei,* 15.1.15–20, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alphons Kalb, *CCSL* 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 453; trans. Marcus Dodds, *City of God,* vol. 2 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), 284.

[116] quas in hoc interim saeculo perplexas quodam modo diximus inuicem que permixtas, exortu et excursu et debitis finibus Ibid., 11.1.30–31, ed. ibid., 321–322; trans. ibid., 205.

should mark the beginning of both the mystical earthly city and its most significant historical manifestation.[117]

Like Augustine, Paschasius also based his parallel between Rome and Corvey on two pairs of brothers, in this case Romulus/Remus and Adalhard/Wala, but Paschasius's version departs significantly from the Augustinian model. In *De Civitate Dei*, the division between Romulus and Remus symbolized "how the earthly city is divided against itself" and the division "between Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men."[118] However, in Paschasius's adaptation, Adalhard and Wala are presented in perfect accord with each another: "Thus you marveled at the singleness of mind in them, one holy and unbreakable grace, not indeed of body but of vigorous mind, one purpose, one unassuming modesty of contemplation."[119] The harmony between the monastery's founding brothers signified the larger harmony between the monks at Corvey and, ultimately, that between the citizens of the heavenly city itself. Paschasius ended his comparison by invoking the Old Testament vision in Ezekiel 40 to establish further Corvey's identity as a heavenly city.

> The earthly one was built in blood, but this one [Corvey], dedicated by them to the Lord, was erected according to the passage in Ezekiel, inclining toward the south, with the same measure upon the same foundations, with the same breadth and length, with the same number of gates and windows, and with no need for any increase.[120]

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[117] quae fuerat huius terrenae ciuitatis, de qua loquimur, caput futura et tam multis gentibus regnatura. Ibid. 15.5.4–6, ed. ibid., 457; trans. ibid. 287; Nees, *Tainted Mantle*, 82.

[118] illud igitur, quod inter remum et romulum exortum est, quem ad modum aduersus se ipsam terrena ciuitas diuidatur, ostendit; quod autem inter cain et abel, inter duas ipsas ciuitates, dei et hominum, inimicitias demonstrauit. Ibid., 15.5.32–35, ed. ibid., 458; trans. ibid.

[119] ita ut mirareris in eis unam sollicitudinem mentis, unam sanctam et inrefrabilem gratiam, et si non corporis, unum vigorem mentis, unumque propositum et unam modestiam meditationis. Paschasius, *Epitaphium*, 1.15.3, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 44; trans. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins,* 122.

[120] nisi quia illa in sanguinibus terrena edificata est; istud vero quod ab istis Domino dedicatum est, sic construitur iuxta illud Hiezechielis, quasi *edificum vergentis ad austrum*. Eisdem itaque mensuris super

The *Epitaphium Arsenii* passage correlates to the *Westwerk's* inscription in two key ways. First, both works recognize Corvey as a heavenly city. Second, both relate the monastic city back to ancient Rome. The inscription evokes Roman monuments through its script and materiality. Paschasius's description literally labels the monastery a "new Rome." The memory of ancient Rome was entwined with the idea of a new, Christian order in Augustine's text, and this idea was picked up and given further expression in the Carolingian period by writers like Paschasius and in material objects like the Corvey inscription. The inscription and the *Epitaphium Arsenii* use the Roman past as a device to exaggerate the achievement of the Christian present and future.

Another aspect of the Civitatem plaque complicates its meaning, namely the fact that it has been reused from an earlier context. A variety of explanations could justify the reuse, ranging from convenience to more abstract, ideological interpretations.[121] However, it is significant that the plaque almost certainly comes from an earlier building phase at Corvey itself. The spoliated past is not Roman or Early Christian, but Carolingian, a past that is both recent and local.

In late Carolingian works of art and architecture, engaging with the early Carolingian past occurs frequently. For example, many works of art and literature produced for Charles the Bald (r. 843–877) were deliberately patterned on exemplars that had been made under Charlemagne, and in this way, Charles invoked the recent past of

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eadem fundamenta, eadem latitudine et longitudine, totidem habens portas, easdemque fenestras, et nullam crescendi aliam rerum magnitudinem. Ibid., 1.18.2, ed. ibid., 48; trans. ibid., 127.

[121] Anthony Cutler, "Reuse or Use? Theoretical and Practical Attitudes Toward Objects in the Early Middle Ages," in *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell'alto Medieoevo. 16-21 aprile 1998,* Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo 46 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo 1999), 1056–1057; Beat Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 103.

his grandfather's time as a basis for identity formation and legitimation in his own time.[122] Instances of newer structures at Carolingian monasteries meaningfully reusing elements from older buildings also exist. At Fulda, an ionic column capital from the original eighth-century basilica built under the monastery's first abbot, Sturm, was repurposed for the slightly later St. Michael Chapel (ca. 820), a rotunda built by the Abbot Eigil and intended as a funerary chapel for Fulda's abbots.[123] The column stands isolated in the center of the circular crypt, supporting the vault and, according to Candidus's life of of Eigil, it symbolized Christ.[124] However, Janneke Raaijmakers has suggested that, as a burial chapel, the rotunda as a whole was "a monument for the abbots to strengthen the awareness of a genealogy, a continuity with the past."[125] The spoliated ionic column at the center of the St. Michael Chapel provided a physical link to Fulda's earliest church and earliest abbot, and in this way, the column represents a material engagement with the monastery's own recent history. Likewise, at Corvey, late Carolingian attentiveness to the early history of the abbey may explain the impulse to preserve the Civitatem plaque on the *Westwerk*.

The importance of the early Carolingian past at Corvey is evident in the *Annales de gestis Caroli Magni*, a five-book epic poem chronicling Charlemagne's reign that was

[122] William Diebold, "Nos quoque morem illius imitari cupientes. Charles the Bald's Evocation and Imitation of Charlemagne," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 75 (1993): 271–300.

[123] Coon, *Dark Age Bodies*, 145; Janneke Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda, c.744–c.900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 169.

[124] cuius tecturae princeps et conditor est Christus Iesus, fundamentum scilicet columnaque manens semper inmobilis perpetuae maiestatis virtute. Candidus, *Vita Eigilis abbatis Fuldensis*, 1.17.5, ed. Georg Waitz, *MGH SS* 15,1 (Hannover: 1887), 231.

[125] Raaijmakers, *Monastic Community of Fulda*, 171.

written for Arnulf of Carinthia.[126] It was composed in the late 880s by a poet known to modern scholars as the Poeta Saxo, who is generally believed to have been a Saxon monk at Corvey.[127] The poem emphasizes Charlemagne's role in the conversion of the Saxons, celebrating how "in modern times (*temporibus modernis*) Charlemagne, by God's grace, has caused innumerable peoples to achieve supreme salvation, capable as he was of beautifully controlling the morals of the faithful, and powerfully transforming the hearts of unbelievers with piety."[128]

The Poeta Saxo's poem draws a parallel between Charlemagne's conversion of the Saxons and the achievements of the ancient Romans in order to amplify the Carolingian emperor's status. Charlemagne's reputation was built not on how well he imitated the Romans but rather on how spectacularly he outdid them.

> With many leaders and over many years the Romans barely managed to bring the peoples of Italy under their sway: single-handed, in the space of a very short time, Charlemagne conquered and subdued the whole of Italy, and administered it as its lord. Consider too all the peoples of Europe whom Charlemagne made his subjects whose very names the Romans did not know. For this reason, those who read about his wondrous deeds cease to be impressed by ancient history. Neither the Decii, nor the Scipios, nor Camillus himself, neither Cato nor Caesar were greater than he; neither Pompey nor the Fabian clan can justly be ranked above him in their efforts for their dead fatherland. Their earthly glory may perhaps have been equal to his but now Charlemagne holds the highest honor in Heaven.[129]

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[126] The poem was not the first to commemorate Charlemagne's victory over the Saxons. A poem written shortly after the mass baptism at Paderborn in 777, possibly by Angilbert from Centula, also addresses the theme. Angilbert (?), *De conversione Saxonum carmen*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH Poetae* 1 (Berlin: 1881), 380–381; for a discussion of the poem and an English translation see Rabe, *Faith, Art, and Politics*, 54–74.

[127] Peter Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 78.

[128] Temporibus Carolus rex, te donante, modernis / Quam multis summae causa salutis erat, / Credentum pulcre moderandis moribus aptus / Et mutare pie perfida corda potens. Poeta Saxo, *Annales de gestis Caroli Poetae*, 5.107–110, ed. P. von Winterfeld, *MGH Poetae* 4 (Berlin: 1899), 58; trans. Godman, *Poetry*, 343.

[129] Sed nec in antiquis ducibus seu regibus illo / Omnimodis quisquam clarior enituit. / Romani multis ducibus multisque sub annis / Italiae populos vix sibi subdiderant: / Unus hic in spacio perpauci temporis omnem / Subiecit victor, disposuit dominus; /Adde tot Europae populos, quos ipse subegit, / Quorum Romani nomina nescierant. / Ob hoc, mirificos Karoli qui legeris actus, / Desine mirari historias veterum. /

Charlemagne surpassed the Romans in terms of the geographical span of his empire, the speed with which he single-handedly built it, and his status as a Christian ruler, who not only conquered but also converted. The recent achievements of the Carolingian emperor had eternal ramifications, while the past achievements of the Roman emperors were only temporal in scope. Given the weight accorded to the recent past in the *Annales* poem, which was probably written at Corvey shortly after the Westwerk was consecrated, it is possible that the reuse of the Civitatem plaque was motivated by an interest in retaining a visible piece of Corvey's early history on the façade of a new, late Carolingian addition to the site.

There are, then, at least two ways of reading the gilded inscription on the Westwerk's façade. The first is as an adaptation of the Augustinian notion of the heavenly city as the superior counterpart to the earthly city of ancient Rome. The second is as a souvenir of an earlier stage in the monastery's own history. Both readings coexist and complement each other, since the rise of Christianity broadly conceived (Augustine's heavenly city) and the more recent successes of the Carolingian empire (the foundation of churches and monasteries in recently conquered regions) were connected in the minds of Carolingian writers and thinkers.[130]

This connection is expressed at the end of the Poeta Saxo's poem, where he envisioned Charlemagne standing among the elect in heaven. The Poeta Saxo

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Non Decii, non Scipiade, non ipse Camillus, / Non Cato, non Caesar maior eo fuerat; / Non Pompeius huic merito vel gens Fabiorum / Prefertur pariter mortua pro patria. / Terrea forsan eis fuerit par gloria; sed nunc / Caelestis Carolus culmen honoris habet. / Poeta Saxo, *Annales*, 5.645–660, ed. Winterfeld, *Poetae* 4, 70; trans. Godman, *Poetry*, 343–345.

[130] For other Carolingian writers who cast the Carolingian empire as advancing a larger Christian cause in contrast to a pagan, Roman empire see Matthew Innes, "Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past," in *The Uses of The Past in the Early Middle Ages,* ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 235.

ambitiously ranked Charlemagne alongside the apostles in the heavenly hierarchy, almost as if Charlemagne were a thirteenth apostle.[131]

> When comes the great Day of Final Judgment, on which You will render to each man what he had deserved, how joyful he will be on giving back the talents entrusted to him, increased with great profit; then no one shall deserve to be nearer to the ranks of the apostles than he, as is self-evident. For when Peter advances, throned by the ranks of Jews who through his teaching came to have faith, and Paul leads the gentiles of the whole world – if it may be put this way – who have been saved by his words, Andrew will bring after him the Greek peoples, and John will lead out the churches of Asia, Matthew will head the Ethiopians made snow-white by baptism and Thomas will conduct the Indians in their flocks to heaven, then the rejoicing throngs of Saxons will follow Charlemagne to his glory and eternal delight.[132]

In conquering and converting the Saxons, it was believed that Charlemagne fulfilled an apostolic mission on par with Christ's most important early followers. Reading the Civitatem plaque as a monument both to the universal Christian church and to a particular Carolingian abbey can, therefore, be mutually reinforcing interpretations, since important events in recent Carolingian history were believed to matter in the larger scheme of Christian history. Like the stucco reliefs, the *Westwerk's* inscription imitates classical visual forms to convey Christian content. The inscription situates the monastery within a longer timeline that reached back to the ancient and recent pasts and looked forward to a heavenly future.

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[131] See Constantine's church of the Holy Apostles for another example of an emperor fashioning himself as a thirteenth apostle. Jaś Elsner, "From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68, (2000): 157–158.

[132] Iudiciique dies cum venerit ultima magni, / Qua reddes omni quod meruit homini, / O quam laetus erit sibimet commissa talenta / Presentans grandi multiplicata lucro; / Nullus apostolici tunc iure propinquior illo, / Ut res ipsa docet, caetibus esse valet. / Nam cum Iudaico processerit agmine Petrus / Stipatus, cuius dogmate crediderat, / Paulus totius <liceat si dicere> mundi / Gentes salvatas duxerit ore suo, / Andreas populos post se producet Achivos, / Iohannes Asiae proferet ecclesias, / Matheus Aethiopes niveos baptismate factos, / Indorum Thomas ducet ad astra greges: / Tum Carolum gaudens Saxonum turma sequetur, / Illi perpetuae gloria laeticiae. Poeta Saxo, *Annales*, 5.673–679, ed. Winterfeld, *Poetae* 4, 71; trans. Godman, *Poetry*, 345.

Portenta in the *Westwerk*

Corvey's stucco reliefs and gilded inscription are not the most overt evocations of antiquity in the *Westwerk*. That distinction belongs to the marine-themed frescoes in the narthex, depicting Odysseus and Scylla, a siren, a sea centaur, and other classical motifs. Claussen argued for an *interpretatio christiana* of these scenes, pointing especially to the idea of the sea as a metaphor for the trials and temptations of the present world (*saeculum*), which Christians must naviagate on the ship of the church. This was a common patristic trope beginning with Ambrose and Augustine that was known to Carolingian authors.[133] In a sermon on the miracle of the Calming of the Storm written in the third quarter of the ninth century, Heiric of Auxerre summarized the metaphor.

> And equally we can accept by means of the spiritual sense that the church [is] figured in the ship whose helmsman is held to be Jesus Christ; the mast in the middle is God the Father; the sail is the law of Moses; the wind is the Holy Spirit; the sailors, the twelve apostles prepared [to sail] between Scylla and Charybdis, that is between pagans and heretics, the ship presses on to reach the shore of [our] heavenly home.[134]

In Late Antique and early medieval sources, Scylla could symbolize a range of vices, most often heresy, but also at times slander and lust;[135] sirens were also mentioned as symbols lust;[136] and centaurs could symbolize hypocrisy.[137] Christians had to navigate

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[133] Claussen, "'das grausige Meer dieser Welt'," 353–355.

[134] Possumus et iuxta spiritalem sensum per nauiculam praesentem ecclesiam figurate accipere, quae habet gubernatorem dominum Ihesum Christum; malum in medio, id est Deum patrem; uelum, id est legem Moysi; uentum, hoc est spiritum sanctum; nautas, duodecim apostolos quibus instructa inter Scyllam et Charybdim, id est inter paganos et haereticos, tendit ad litus caelestis patriae peruenire. Heiric of Auxerre, *Homiliae per circulum anni, pars hiemalis*, ed. Riccardo Quadri, *CCCM* 116 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), 22.103. See also Dunghal, *Epistolae* 6, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 4, (Berlin: 1895), p. 581, ln.7.

[135] Aut uelut quaedam monstruosis Scylla portentis in uarias formas distincta perfidiae uelut superne uacuum christianae sectae nomen obtendit, sed quos in illo impietatis suae freto miseros inter naufragia fidei reppererit fluctuantes, beluinis succincta prodigiis tetri dogmatis saeuo dente dilacerat. Ambrose of Milan, *De fide libri V (ad Gratianum Augustum)*, 1.6.29, ed. Otto Faller, *CSEL* 78 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1962), 20.

around these vices and temptations in their metaphorical voyage through life to heaven.

In Claussen's analysis of the Corvey frescoes, she briefly mentioned the importance of the concept of spiritual warfare waged between the virtues and vices to early medieval monasticism.[138] Given the monastic context of the images and the fact that Scylla, sirens, and centaurs were frequently invoked as symbols for vices, this connection deserves to be explored further. The idea of a spiritual war between the virtues and vices as described in Prudentius' *Psychomachia* provided the primary metaphor for the psychological struggle that, in principle, every monk faced, including the original founders of the monastery at Corvey. In his description of Corvey as a new Rome, Paschasius framed Corvey's foundation in direct contradistinction to Rome and its wars. While Rome was "built to subdue nations" and grew wealthy off "bloody wars," the monastic city of Corvey sought to disentangle itself from the affairs of nations and to cultivate poverty rather than to amass spoils. Paschasius cast Adalhard and Wala as aristocratic soldiers transformed into Christian ones, thereby drawing attention to their shift from earthly warfare to the *psychomachia* of monastic life. As nephews of Pepin and first cousins of Charlemagne, the two half-brothers were directly related to the

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[136] Fulgentius Mythographus. *Mitologiarum libri tres*, 2.9.4, ed. Rudolf Helm, *Fabii Planciadis Fulgentii opera*. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: 1898), 49. Sirenas tres fingunt fuisse ex parte uirgines, ex parte uolucres, habentes alas et ungulas: quarum una uoce, altera tibiis, tertia lyra canebant. Quae inlectos nauigantes sub cantu in naufragium trahebant. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. Lindsay, *Etymologiarvm*, 11.3.30—31.

[137] Similiter et onocentauri, a pectore et sursum hominis habet figuram, deorsum autem asini. Sic et uir duplex corde, indispositus in omnibus uiis suis. Ita sunt malorum negotiatorum, et actus anime; in ecclesia quidem colliguntur, absconse autem peccant: Habentes quidem (et apostolus dixit) speciem pietatis, uirtutem autem eius denegantes. Et in ecclesia anime quorumdam sicut oues sunt; cum autem dimissi fuerint a collecta, fiunt tamquam pecora: Et assimilabuntur iumentis insensatis. Hi tales siue syrene siue onocentauri figuram ostendunt aduersariorum. *Physiologus latinus (Uersio Y)*, 15.12, ed. Francis J. Carmody, University of California Publications in Classical Philology 12, 7 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1944), 114.

[138] She interpreted the allegorical use of the images to be a part of the learned monastic culture, familiar with classics and Late Antique literature, more than connecting the scenes to the concept of *psychomachia*. Claussen, "'das grausige Meer dieser Welt,'" 350–351.

Carolingian ruling family.[139] However, Paschasius continually reminded his readers that the brothers had renounced their wealth and aristocratic heritage to become soldiers for Christ.[140]

The conversion from *miles* to *monachus* is particularly strong in Paschasius's account of Wala's life, since Wala had literally been a soldier at the Carolingian court before becoming a monk.[141] Paschasius wrote "the truth is that from boyhood, Prior Arsenius extended his fame by soldiery and high office."[142] However, in Wala's later career, the nature of the combat completely changed.

> Later, when he was chosen as abbot, he advanced everywhere to the field first as if [he was] His standard-bearer in the battle array against most savage foes. For as the warfare changed, the soldier also changed. He who had once borne arms against the Abitrices, an unyielding people, was at length proclaimed even more gloriously to have borne the banner of virtue against the monsters of vice

[139] Qui cum esset regali prosapia, Pippini magni regis nepos, Caroli consobrinus Augusti, inter palatii tirocinia omni mundi prudentia eruditus, una cum terrarum principe magistris adhibitus. Paschasius, *Vita Adalhardi,* 7, ed. Migne, *PL* 120, col. 1511B. Fuit enim consobrinus maximi Augustorum eique prae cunctis acceptior, in sermone verax (ut de illo dicitur, cujus apud nos nuper delati cineres, tantis coruscarunt miraculis), in judicio justus, providus in consilio, et in commisso fidelissimus). idem., *Epitaphium*, 1.1.2, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 22.

[140] Viginti etenim fiunt quinque quater ducti, aut quatuor quinquies supputati; quibus ita collectis, constat eos tantum ad bella fore promptissimos, qui Veteris ac Novi Testamenti aetate senuerint, et ejus sapientia fuerint educati. […] Inde igitur est, mi Pater omnipotens, quod Bernarius noster Lirinum remittitur: Wala vero tuus Corbeia, ut dixi, tiro recipitur. Qui deponens militiae cingulum, ut te totum velle sanctitatis indueret, arripuit primum tirocinia paradisi, ut consummaret in se mensuram Christi. Paschasius, *Vita Adalhardi,* 8.3 and 35.1, ed. Migne, *PL* 120, col. 1512C and 1528A.

[141] Hoc igitur negotium ejus et causa negotii, hoc otium et labor, haec jejunia et vigiliae, haec cura et perpetua mentis sollicitudo, ut nunquam desineret, quod semel coeperat in militia Christi. Unde plurimum aliis enituit, quod sibi ait Deo ac proximis tantus idemque semper fuit; nec ulli plus quam sibi severus, nec alium magis quam semet judicavit. […]His ita dictis tandem vix credulus viator sine damno, suis se viduavit armis, et munera insperata revexit. Tunc noster Arsenius: Melius mihi, inquit, vilia decent cum plaustro, quoniam non militiae nunc saeculi, sed communis vitae negotiis vaco. Quid igitur iste, fratres, nisi David usus exemplo aiebat: Adhuc vilior fiam, et ero in oculis meis humilis; praesertim quia cum sibi quisque pro Deo indignior apparet, Deo acceptior fit: et cum sibi magnus sufficiensque, utique, sicut legitur, parvulus aestimatur. […]Testes quidem, quod velut aurum in fornace fuit probatus, inter omnia increpationum dura et aspera, in tantum qui necdum tyro, ut perfectus jam Christi miles haberetur. Erat in illo Spiritus Dei; et ideo, ut fertur, in nullis frangebatur molestiarum spiculis; sed seipso quotidie probatior renitebat. Paschasius, *Epitaphium*, 1.4.5, 1.6.4, and 1.9.8, ed. Dümmler, vol. 2 of *Abhandlungen*, 26, 29, and 35.

[142] Verum quod prioris Arsenii a puero ex militia et dignitate gloriam ampliavit. Ibid., 1.1.2, ed. ibid., 22; Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins,* 88.

> (*vitiorum portenta*). He who once despised the honors of the world for religion now wears the palm for reward.[143]

The decision to use the word "*portentum*" to describe the vices Wala battled in this passage may have been inspired by the *Psychomachia.* The preface to the *Psychomachia* asserts that the human "spirit, battling valorously," is supposed to "overcome with great slaughter the monsters (*portenta*) in the enslaved heart."[144] Equally, "the way of victory is before our eyes if we may mark at close quarters the very features of the Virtues, and the monsters (*portenta*) that close with them in deadly struggle."[145]

In early medieval texts, *portentum* could mean anything that was "contrary to what is known in nature."[146] Taking this broad definition of the word, Isidore of Seville's chapter on portents includes a lengthy list of monstrous human-animal hybrids, including sirens and centaurs. *Portenta* could refer to both vices and aberrant, hybrid creatures. While Paschasius's use of the phrase "*vitiorum portenta*" referred to Wala's personal *psychomachia*, the painted *portenta* in the narthex may be interpreted as visualizations of the spiritual threats to the monastic community at Corvey at large.

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[143] et deincepts cum iam pater esset electus, quasi eius signifer ad aciem contra inmanissimos hostes primus ubique processit ad campum. Mutata siquidem militia mutatus est et miles: qui primum arma tulerat contra Abitrices, gentem indomabilem, demum contra vitiorum portenta virtutum vexilla tullisse gloriosius predicatur. Unde nunc palmam gestat pro munere, qui olim honores contempsit seculi pro religione. Ibid., 1.11.11, ed. ibid., 40; trans. ibid., 116.

[144] quam strage multa bellicosus spiritus / portenta cordis servientis vicerit. Prudentius, *Psychomachia,* praef. ln. 13–14, ed. Cunningham, *CCSL* 126, 149; trans. Thomson, *Prudentius*, 275.

[145] vincendi praesens ratio est, si comminus ipsas / Virtutum facies et conluctantia contra / viribus infestis liceat portenta notare. Ibid., ln. 18–20, ed. ibid., 150; trans. ibid., 281.

[146] Portentum ergo fit non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura. Portenta autem et ostenta, monstra atque prodigia ideo nuncupantur, quod portendere atque ostendere, monstrare ac praedicare aliqua futura uidentur. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. Lindsay, *Etymologiarvm*, 11.3.1–4. Isidore was quoting Augustine, *De civitate Dei,* 21.8.34–36.

What is unusual about the frescoes as representations of vices is the fact that the concept is represented through the lens of Greco-Roman myth, even though there were other ways of depicting the subject. Manuscripts and ivories from the Carolingian period, for example, represented the theme primarily through images of battling personifications, as in the Bern *Psychomachia* [see Fig. 89]. Likewise, Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon Psalters could also visualize the theme using generic scenes of battle between men and other men, men and angels, or men and fantastic beasts.[147] However, the makers of the Corvey frescoes innovatively used myths and motifs from a culture that was morally distant, temporally removed, and geographically remote from their own to visualize a phenomenon that was a familiar and daily challenge to the frescoes' primary audience of learned monks.

Dell'Acqua has accounted for the unusual subject matter of the frescoes at Corvey by linking them to the potential function of the *Westwerk* as a location where baptisms were performed.[148] She observed that water was one of the unifying themes of the frescoes and argued that this did not merely evoke the negative dangers and temptations

[147] See the essays in Colum Hourihane (ed.), *Virtue & Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). Older studies include Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Mediaeval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964); Jennifer O'Reilly, *Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland, 1988). On the importance of the notion of spiritual battle in specifically monastic contexts, see Kathleen Openshaw, "Weapons in the Daily Battle: Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter," *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 1 (1993): 17–38; Heather Pulliam, "Exaltation and Humiliation: The Decorated Initials of the Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 18)," *Gesta* 49, no. 2 (2010): 97–115; Thomas E. A. Dale, "Monsters, Corporeal Deformities, and Phantasms in the Cloister of St-Michel-de-Cuxa," *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 3 (2001): 402–36. Openshaw considers Insular and Anglo-Saxon monastic contexts, while Pulliam's discussion relates to a Psalter produced at the monastery of Corbie, Corvey's mother house, in the mid-eighth century. Dale addresses hybrid monsters in later monastic contexts, arguing that "the monstrous creatures in the Romanesque cloister capitals functioned as conventional examples of corporeal deformity, which manifest in visible form the spiritual deformities, inner desires, and phantasms that perturbed the collective imagination of the monastic community." (p. 403). The mythological frescoes at Corvey are a particularly imaginative approach to visualizing a concept (*psychomachia*) that could be represented in a variety of ways.

[148] Dell'Acqua, "Westwerk di Corvey," 165.

of the world, but could also be positively linked to the Sacrament. She further recognized that the forced, mass baptism of the Saxons, which occurred in Paderborn in 777, was a well-known event in the history of the region around Corvey.[149] Since Corvey was one of the first monasteries established in the diocese of Paderborn following the end of the Saxon wars in 804, the memory of the wars and the conversion of the Saxons was part of Corvey's institutional memory. Describing all the churches and monasteries Charelemagne founded on the sites of Saxon shrines, the Poeta Saxo associated the origins of institutions like Corvey with the larger project to bring the Saxons into the Carolingian empire.

> Who can count how many souls he restored to the Lord when he made Christians of the Saxon peoples? Or the numbers of churches which now gleam, where men of old worshiped at pagan shrines; the numbers of monasteries that have been built?[150]

The pagan Saxon landscape was transformed into a Christian Carolingian one through the construction of churches and monasteries, just as the local population was converted through baptism. As an architectural edifice in a Saxon monastery where baptisms were possibly performed, the *Westwerk* was a monument to both kinds of conversion, human and geographic. Furthermore, the frescoes' appropriation of mythological subjects from an ancient pagan tradition, given a new Christian meaning, could be understood as yet another form of conversion. If dell'Acqua is correct, this means that subjects from Greco-Roman mythology could bring to mind, albeit obliquely, events from the recent

[149] The mass baptism was performed by Abbot Sturm and four hundred monks from Fulda, indicating the scale of the event. James Cathey, "The Historical Setting of the *Heliand*, the Poem, and the Manuscripts," in *Perspectives on the Old Saxon Heliand: Introductory and Critical Essays*, ed. by Valentine A. Pakis (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2010), 12.

[150] Quis numeret, quantas animas, dum credere fecit / Saxonum populos, reddiderit domino? /Quot nunc aecclesiae fulgent, ubi fana colebant / Antiqui, quot sunt structa monasteria, Poeta Saxo, *Annales*, 5.667–670, ed. Winterfeld, *Poetae* 4, 71; trans. Godman, *Poetry*, 345.

Saxon past.[151]

Dell'Acqua's thesis is supported by literary examples where the Saxons and other pre-Carolingian pagan communities are portrayed in the same terms as the ancient Romans. For example, Angilbert's late eighth-century poem, *De conversione Saxonum*, introduces the Saxons not as worshipping their famous tree-idol Irminsul, but like Romans, slaughtering livestock and venerating penates.

> The nation of the Saxons, sprung from depraved blood, merited to know the highest king of heaven; a nation which long ago was placing filthy gifts at polluted temples, consumed with quick flames, pyre-like; duly was slaughtering bulls at bloodied altars. And, by suppliantly bending necks, venerating the abominable cults of demons, and princes, gods, penates.[152]

In another mission-minded text, the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, the Anglo-Saxon missionary known as the "apostle to the Germans," Boniface, attacks idols of Germanic woodland gods that are identified in classical terms as fauns (*faunos*), satyrs (*sathyros*), driads (*driades*), and nymphs (*napeas*).[153] Notably, Boniface guarantees that his destruction of the pagan gods (*portenta*) is upheld by founding churches and monasteries on the sites where the idols once stood. Ways of describing one kind of non-Christian religious tradition were appararently transferrable to others.

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[151] On the relationship between the Roman and Germanic pasts in Carolingian history writing see: Innes, "Teutons or Trojans?" 227–249.

[152] In quo Saxonum pravo de sanguine creta / Gens meruit regem summum cognoscere caeli, / Sordida pollutis quae pridem dona sacellis / Ponebat rapidis bustim depasta camini, / Rite cruentatas tauros mactabat ad aras. / Et demonum cultus colla inflectendo nefandos, / Suppliciter venerans proceresque, deosque, penates. Angilbert (?), De Conversione Saxonum, ln. 28–29, ed. Dümmler, *MGH Poetae* 1, 180; trans. Rabe, *Faith, Art, and Politics*, 64.

[153] Sed Bonifacius, falcem manu tenens divinam, omnes faunos et sathyros quos nonnulli paganorum silvestres deos appellant, funditus extirpavit. Similiter autem et driades napeasque et cetera huiusmodi magis portenta quam numina christianis omnibus nauci pendere persuasit. Verum quia non sufficit, si mala deiciantur, nisi et bona stabiliantur, sicut non sufficit, si evellas et destruas, nisi eciam edifices et plantes, vir iste spiritu Dei plenus in locis, a quibus supradictas vanitates expulerat, ilico monasteria inclita et basilicas eximias, altaria quoque divinis sacrificiis apta construxit ibique invocari statuit nomen Dei vivi, ubi mortua ydola ab indigenis eatenus colebantur. Radobodus, *Vita Altera Bonifatii*, 8, ed. William Levison, *MGH SS rer. Germ* 57 (Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1905), 68; Wood, "Missionary Hagiography," 196.

Much of what the Carolingians knew about the pre-Christian, Germanic past was also transmitted through classical Roman texts, offering yet another reason for the Roman and Saxon pasts to be linked in the Carolingian imagination. As Peter Brown has put it: "The Carolingian 'discovery of Germany' took place in Latin."[154] For example, in the ninth century, Corvey's scriptorium produced a copy of Tacitus' *Annales*, which is today in the Laurenziana in Florence (Bibl. Laur. Med. 68,1).[155] The text includes Tacitus' section on Germanicus' campaigns, which were waged in response to Hermann the Cheruscan's victory over Varus' legions.[156] The Varian disaster was the most noteworthy event to be recorded as occuring in Saxony during the Roman period, and it happened in a forest on the Weser river in the vicinity of Corvey. The effort exerted to preserve the memory of the pre-Carolingian, Germanic past by copying Roman histories has, again, been linked to the missionary agenda pursued by monasteries in Saxony.[157]

Finally, there is another late ninth-century work of art that translates a Carolingian monastery's recent history into antique images, namely the Flabellum of Tournus (ca. 875) [Fig. 93]. The Flabellum's case depicts six scenes from Virgil's Ecologues, and the scenes' overarching themes of longing, exile, and journey have been interpreted by Danielle Gaborit-Chopin and Herbert Kessler as allusions to the monastic community at

[154] Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, ca. 200–1000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 480.

[155] Hermann-Josef Schmalor, *Die westfälischen Stifts- und Klosterbibliotheken bis zur Säkularisation: Ergebnisse einer Spurensuche hinsichtlich ihrer Bestände und inhaltlichen Ausrichtung* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2005), 20.

[156] Tac. Ann. 1.59–62; Günther Tiggesbäumker, "Vor 500 Jahren aus Corvey 'entwendet': Die Tacitus-Handschrift und ihre Überlieferungen," *Höxter-Corvey* 57, no. 2 (2009): 11.

[157] Paxton, *Anchoress and Abbess,* 8; Brown, *Rise of Westwern Christendom*, 480.

Tournus' own history of exile.[158] In 834, Norman invaders forced the monastic community that would eventually settle in Tournus to flee their mother abbey of Noirmoutier. The community, carrying the relics of St. Philibert with them, remained more or less itinerant for decades before they finally settled in Tournus in 875. The creation of the Flabellum after the monks arrived visualized their recent history of exile through classical allegory.

For these reasons, it is plausible that the mythological frescoes in the *Westwerk* at Corvey were chosen because the mythological traditions of one remote pagan empire, Rome, could fuel thoughts of another, more immediate pagan group, the Saxons. The frescoes work on multiple levels. They bring to mind the monsters of vice, which monks would fight in daily spiritual battle; they provide a visual commentary on baptism and conversion; and they commemorate the unique historical circumstances under which the monastery was founded. Like the stucco reliefs and the gilded inscription, the frescoes use subjects and visual forms from the remote past to comment on recent history.

Conclusions

That the *Westwerk* was finished sixty years after the original church at Corvey was founded is significant. One can imagine a scenario in the 870s and 880s in which a second or third generation of monks at Corvey was reflecting back on the earlier history of their abbey. This moment was also around the time when Corvey began to record their

[158] Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, "Le Flabellum de Tournus: son origine et sa place dans l'art carolingien," in *Saint-Philibert de Tournus: histoire, archéologie, art; Actes du colloque du Centre International d'Etudes Romanes, Tournus, 15 - 19 juin 1994*, ed. by Jacques Thirion (Tournus: Centre international d'études romanes, 1995), 585–612; Herbert L. Kessler, "Images Borne on a Breeze: the Function of the Flabellum of Tournus as Meaning," in *Charlemagne et les objets: Des thésaurisations carolingiennes aux constructions mémorielles,* ed. Philippe Cordez (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), 64.

Annales, begun in the 860s or 870s.[159] The *Annales*, like other monasteries', were written in the margins of Easter Tables, charts for calculating the date of Easter Sunday every year. In this way, the monastery's history was synchronized with a more transcendent form of time, the liturgical calendar.[160] The construction of the *Westwerk* (which may have been used for Easter liturgies) was another way for the Corvey monks to construct a history that not only reflected the particularities of their institution's foundation but also extended beyond them.

The Corvey stucco reliefs demonstrate that even when early medieval sculpture actively drew on antique visual conventions and imitated stone sculpture, such artistic creations were not inevitably perceived as idolatrous. The Carolingian *renovatio* was a complex cultural phenomenon, and the Corvey reliefs illustrate how antique sculpture was not universally reviled in Carolingian memory as a pagan tradition that had to be denied, resisted, or parodied.[161] Instead, evoking the memory of antique sculpture at Corvey was a useful strategy for shoreing up the agendas of the present. The imaginative revival of the antique past in the *Westwerk* reveals much about the priorities of a late ninth-century monastic community, seeking to embed their institution in a deeper history.

The first three chapters of this dissertation have demonstrated the necessity of placing stucco relief in dialogue with other artistic materials and media. In Ravenna and

[159] Krüger, "Zur Geschichte," 46.

[160] Regarding history writing in the margins of Easter Tables, Raaijmakers has argued: "To people in the early Middle Ages, this form of structuring time and recording the past explicitly linked the present to the *sexta aetas*. By recording how many years had passed between the birth of Christ and events that converned their own community they positioned themselves in salvation history. Similarly, the monks of Fulda oriented important events of local and royal history in relation to the Incarnation of Christ. Their historical notes in the Easter Tabels bridged temporal time and eternal time, the *historia profana* and the *sacra historia*, Fulda's past and the eschatological future of the Heavenly Jerusalem." Raaijmakers, *Monastic Community of Fulda*, 58.

[161] On parody, see Nees, *Tainted Mantle*, 209; Dennis Kratz, *Mocking Epic: Waltharius, Alexandreis, and the Problem of Christian Heroism* (Madrid: Studia Humanitatis, 1980).

Cividale these dialogues were expressed by literally juxtaposing stucco with mosaic and fresco, but the analysis of Corvey's *Westwerk* given in the present chapter has revealed that comparisons did not have to be literal or internal to a space. Evoking *in absentia* materials and media could be achieved through imitation and emulation. Chapter Four will continue the inquiry into relationships between artistic media by examining how the St. Ulrich Chapel in Müstair transposes an artistic subject that was commonly executed in mosaic or fresco into stucco relief.

The St. Ulrich Chapel in Müstair: Medium as Mediator

Stucco Relief in Müstair in the Eleventh Century

Founded in the last quarter of the eighth century, the Carolingian monastery of St. Johann in Müstair underwent numerous expansion and renovation campaigns over the course of the Middle Ages.[1] One late eleventh-century addition to the site, the St. Ulrich Chapel, features a striking artistic program executed largely in stucco relief [see Fig. 4]. The Chapel stands in the middle of the west wing of the monastery's Romanesque courtyard, which originally served as a residence for the bishop of Chur when he was in Müstair [Fig. 94]. The St. Ulrich Chapel occupies the lower story of a two-story double chapel, with the upper level dedicated to St. Nicholas. In Figure 94, the cubic construction on the ground floor encloses the St. Ulrich Chapel's sanctuary, while the apse on the upper story belongs to the St. Nicholas Chapel. Unlike some other so-called double chapels, where the upper and lower floors communicated through a central atrium or window, no central opening connects the St. Nicholas Chapel to the St. Ulrich Chapel.[2] Instead, two stairwells outside the west corners of the chapels' naves would have enabled people to gain access to the upper chapel from the lower or vice versa. Actions performed in one would not have been audible or visible in the other.

The St. Ulrich Chapel is divided into two parts: a small sanctuary with a vaulted ceiling and rectilinear architectural footprint and a larger, rectilinear nave [Fig. 95]. The

[1] Jürg Goll, Matthias Exner, and Susanne Hirsch, *Müstair: Die mittelalterlichen Wandbilder in der Klosterkirche* (Munich: Hirmer, 2007), 11ff.

[2] Maureen Catherine Miller, *The Bishop's Palace: Architecture and Authority in Medieval Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 229.

stucco reliefs that survive all occur in the sanctuary, since the nave's decoration and ceiling were mostly destroyed in a fire in 1499 [Fig. 96].[3] A cross section of the nave's original wood ceiling is visible today above the entrance to the sanctuary. The wood is badly charred from the fire, but a surviving sliver suggests that the ceiling was partially protected from the fire, potentially by the edge of an ornamental stucco arch around the doorway [Fig. 97]. Therefore, the stucco decoration of the Chapel may not have been limited to the sanctuary; there may also have been stucco elements in the nave. A fragmentary, painted inscription on the wall to the left of the entrance to the sanctuary attests to a dedication to St. Ulrich and St. Sabine: "*CONF(essor) UODA(lricus) ... [S]ABINE*" [Fig. 98]. A fresco depicting fish and other, more fantastic, marine creatures decorates the soffit of the arched doorway that leads into the chapel [Fig. 99].[4] The painted images in the entrance are the only figures in the sanctuary's decorative program not rendered in stucco relief.

Within the sanctuary, traces of stucco haloes on the sidewalls indicate that figures of saints once flanked the windows on the north and south walls, though this part of the program is largely destroyed [Fig. 100].[5] Bands of ornamental relief in four different foliate and interlace designs — a different design for each wall — decorate the arches over the sidewalls and the entrance [Fig. 101]. Four winged Evangelist symbols or the four creatures of the Apocalypse occupy the room's corners, though the man and eagle remain in better condition than the ox and lion [Fig. 102]. Above the creatures, the

[3] Hans Rudolf Sennhauser and Jürg Goll, "Müstair, Ausgrabung und Bauuntersuchung im Kloster St. Johann," *Jahresberichte des Archäologischen Dienstes Graubünden und Denkmalpflege Graubünden* (2001): 21.

[4] Claussen, "'das grausige Meer dieser Welt,'" 377–381.

[5] The east wall may have also had saints on it, but no physical traces survive today.

panels of the vault originally supported half-length figures of angels, though only three of the figures are preserved [Fig. 103]. Vine stalks with curling, tri-lobed leaves follow the ribs of the vault and terminate in a medallion at the apex of the ceiling, which is circumscribed by a border of bead-and-reel and pearl motifs. What subject originally occupied the center of the medallion is unknown, though it may have been a representation of a Chi-Rho or cross, as occurs at other sites. For example, the oratory of Sant'Andrea in Ravenna (ca. 494–519), a chapel in a much earlier bishop's residence, displays a similar array of angels and Evangelist symbols or creatures of the Apocalypse around a medallion with a chrismon [Fig. 104].[6] Maureen Miller has suggested that the vault in the chapel in Ravenna intentionally copied the composition of four angels around a wreathed cross from the older Santa Croce Chapel in the Lateran, which was built in the 460s by Pope Hilary. The vault mosaic in the Lateran chapel was destroyed in 1588, but the design is known from Renaissance sketches.[7] Indeed, the Santa Croce vault seems to have been a popular model for many later chapels, including the ninth-century San Zeno Chapel in Sta. Prassede in Rome.

The St. Ulrich Chapel sanctuary's surviving decoration creates a heavenly space. The program begins with the marine fresco in the entryway. The fresco could be compared to the arch over the apse of the St. Theodore Chapel in the abbey church of Saint-Chef-en-Dauphiné in southeastern France, which dates to shortly after the turn of the twelfth century [Fig. 105]. The St-Chef arch also features a range of mythological

[6] Miller, *The Bishop's Palace*, 222; see also Giuseppe Gerola, "Il ripristino della cappella di S. Andrea nel palazzo vescovile di Ravenna," *Felix Ravenna* 41 (1932): 112n1.

[7] Miller, *The Bishop's Palace*, 222; Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 51; Vladimir Ivanovici, "Capturing Light in Late Antique Ravenna. A New Interpretation of the Archbishops' Chapel," *Zograf* 37 (2013): 17.

marine creatures and fish, and Élisabeth Chatel has interpreted the motifs as a representation of the crystal sea from the Apocalypse (Rev. 4:6).[8] At Müstair, the four creatures inside the sanctuary, which are also mentioned in Revelation 4:6, as well as the angels in the vault imbue the program with eschatological valences; and so it is possible that the fresco in the intrados was designed to represent the crystal sea, as well. However, Claussen argued for a different reading. She associated the Müstair and St-Chef scenes along with the sea monsters on the periphery of the slightly later painted ceiling at the church of St. Martin in Zillis (ca. 1109–1114) — which, like Müstair, is part of the diocese of Chur — with the Augustinian "sea of the world" metaphor, as discussed in Chapter Three [Fig. 106].[9] In this interpretation, the location of the marine scenes in an entryway is key, because the fresco marks a transition from a terrestrial space outside the sanctuary into the celestial space inside. Regardless of how one understands the frescoes, the ultimate interpretation that the saints, tetramorphs, and angels inside the St. Ulrich Chapel sanctuary are meant to create a heavenly space remains valid.

Placing angels in the wings of a groin vault was a common practice in Romanesque decorative programs used to evoke heavenly spaces. A similar arrangement involving full-length angels with trumpets occurs at San Pietro al Monte in Civate (ca.

[8] Élisabeth Chatel, "Les scènes marine des fresques de Saint-Chef: Essai d'interprétation," *Synthronon, Art, et Archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, ed. André Grabar (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1968), 177–187. This use of marine imagery that may have also occurred in a fresco in the basilica of San Ambrosio in Milan. Jacqueline Leclercq-Kadaner, "La 'mer céleste' à l'époque romane, à propos d'une fresque de la basilique Saint-Ambrose à Milan," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 20 (1977): 352–355; Barbara Franzé, *La Pierre et l'image: l'Église de Saint-Chef-en-Dauphiné* (Paris: Picard, 2011), 192–196.

[9] Claussen, "'das grausige Meer dieser Welt,'" 379–380; Ulrich Ruoff, Mathias Seifert, and Felix Walder, "Dendrochronologische Untersuchungen 1994/95," in *Die romanische Bilderdecke der Kirche St. Martin in Zillis: Grundlagen zur Konservierung und Pflege*, ed. Christine Bläuer et al. (Bern: Haupt, 1997), 254; Jürgen Thies, *Die romanische Bilderdecke der Kirche St. Martin in Zillis/Graubünden im Fokus*, vol. 2 of *Die Symbole der Romanik und das Böse* (Nürtingen: Verlag und Galerie für Kunst und Kunsttherapie, 2007), 314–318.

1070–1100), a site that is closely contemporary with the St. Ulrich Chapel [Fig. 107].[10] An expanded and elaborated version appears in the later crypt at the abbey of Montemaria in Burgusio (ca. 1177), a site that is geographically proximate to Müstair [Fig. 108].[11] However, most Romanesque vaults that frame angels in this way are executed in fresco. The St. Ulrich Chapel is the only extant example of an eleventh-century vault with angels in relief. The departure from standard practice requires an explanation. Moreover, contemporary frescoes occur in other spaces in the monastery at Müstair, including the fresco in the intrados of the doorway leading into the St. Ulrich Chapel's sanctuary itself. Both fresco painting and stucco relief were produced at the site in the eleventh century. The person who commissioned the decoration of the St. Ulrich Chapel likely had access to resources that would have enabled him to pick either medium. The Chapel, therefore, presents a situation where both sculpture and painting were options, but stucco was deliberately chosen over fresco for the figures in the sanctuary.

This chapter seeks to answer the question of why the makers of the decorative program in the sanctuary of the St. Ulrich Chapel chose to use stucco relief instead of fresco. It will do this by relating the decorative program to two other examples of figural stucco sculpture from Müstair: a panel from a historiated chancel barrier depicting the Baptism of Christ and a figure of a king, invariably identified in modern scholarship as Charlemagne, which were both made for the monastery's main church of St. Johann. The

[10] Monika E. Müller, *Omnia in mensura et numero et pondere disposita: Die Wandmalereien und Stuckarbeiten von San Pietro al Monte di Civate* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2009).

[11] Helmut Stampfer, *Die Krypta von Marienberg im Vinschgau: romanische Fresken – Neufunde und Altbestand* (Bozen: Athesia: 1982); Thomas E. A. Dale, "'In paradisum deducant te angeli': Shaping Celestial Space in the Romanesque Burial Crypt of Montemaria at Burgusio," in *Shaping Sacred Space and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Painting*, ed. Thomas Dale and John Mitchell (London: Pindar, 2004), 149–150.

Baptism panel from the chancel barrier (ca. 127 cm x 157 cm x 15 cm) is currently embedded over the early Carolingian doorway in the north wall of the church [Fig. 109].[12] Decorating liturgical furnishings with figural stucco reliefs was a common practice in the Romanesque period, as exemplified by the figural stucco ciboria in San Ambrogio in Milan (late tenth century) and San Pietro al Monte in Civate (late eleventh century) [Fig. 111].[13] Stucco was also used for figural imagery on ciboria and pulpits in southern Italy in the mid- to late twelfth century, as demonstrated by the elaborate stucco ciborium and pulpit in Santa Maria in Valle Porclaneta in Rosciolo dei Marsi, the ciborium in the church of San Clemente in Guardia Vomano, and the pulpits from the abbey of Santa Maria del Lago in Moscufo and the church of Santo Stefano in Cugnoli.[14] Therefore, the fact that narrative scenes executed in stucco relief were used to decorate a piece of liturgical furniture like a chancel barrier would not have been particularly unusual in the eleventh century.[15] The Müstair panel places Christ in a mountain of water at the center of the composition, while the dove of the Holy Spirit descends from above. John the Baptist stands off to one side with his hands raised in veneration, while on the opposite side, an angel approaches Christ carrying a cloth. The Charlemagne

[12] Jürg Goll, "Relief du Baptême du Christ," in Sapin, *Le Stuc,* 216.

[13] Carlo Bertelli, Pinin Brambilla Barcilon and Antonietta Gallone, *Il ciborio della basilica di Sant'Ambrogio in Milano* (Milan: Credito Artigiano, 1981); Adriano Peroni, "La plastica in stucco nel Sant'Ambrogio di Milano: Arte ottoniana e romanica in Lombardia," in *Kolloquium über spätantike und frühmittelalterliche Skulptur,* ed. Vladimir Milojčić, Kolloquium über frühmittelalterliche Skulptur 3 (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1974), 59–111; Carlo Marcora, *Gli stucchi di S. Pietro al Monte sopra Civate* (Oggiono, Lecco: Cattaneo, 1974).

[14] Corgnati, *Le arte dello stucco,* 183–226; Albert Dietl, vol. 1 of *Die Sprache der Signatur: Die mittelalterlichen Künstlerinschriften Italiens* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009), 226–245. On the pulpits in southern Italy in their ritual context see Nino Zchomelidse, *Art, Ritual, and Civic Identity in Medieval Southern Italy* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 170–203.

[15] While it has been suggested that the Baptism plaque may have been used as an antependium on an altar, this seems unlikely. Recently the archaeologists engaged by the Bauhütte und Archäologie offices at Müstair broke open a hole in the wall behind the plaque so that they could examine the back. They found that the back of the plaque had been painted, which suggests that it was originally part of a freestanding structure, visible from both sides. This makes a chancel barrier more likely than an antependium.

figure, which is nearly life-size and rendered in deep relief, currently stands on the pillar between the middle and south apses of Müstair's main church [Fig. 112].

Jean Wirth argued that the reliefs in the St. Ulrich Chapel, the Baptism of Christ panel, and the Charlemagne figure all date to the same time, the late eleventh century, and may be attributed to the same patron, Bishop Norpert of Chur (1079–1088).[16] He based his argument on the unusual composition of the Baptism panel, which he linked to Norpert's imperial political leanings during the Investiture Controversy.[17] Rather than actively participating in the Baptism, John the Baptist stands at a slight distance without touching Christ. The composition departs from the usual pattern for Baptism scenes, which requires John to touch Christ's head as on the painted ceiling at Zillis [Fig. 110]. Wirth interpreted the decision to limit John's role on the Müstair Baptism plaque as a deliberate attempt to downplay the importance of clerics in acts of anointment and thus a visual expression of Norpert's imperial sympathies.[18]

Norpert's election as bishop of Chur was contentious, since he was the favorite imperial candidate, while his rival, Ulrich II von Tarasp, was the papal favorite and a

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[16] Jean Wirth, "Bemerkungen zu den Stifterbildern von St. Benedikt in Mals und St. Johann in Müstair," in *Für irdischen Ruhm und himmlischen Lohn. Stifter und Auftraggeber in der mittelalterlichen Kunst*, ed. Hans Rudolf Meier, Carola Jäggi, and Philippe Büttner (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1995), 85.

[17] Ibid., 84. Josef Zemp and Robert Durrer, *Das Kloster St. Johann zu Münster in Graubünden* (Geneva: Von Atar, 1906), 44; Erwin Poeschel, *Die Täler am Vorderrhein. Schmals, Rheinwald, Avers, Münstertal, Bergell,* vol. 5 of *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Graubünden* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1943), 310; Paul Deschamps, "A propos des pierres a décors d'entrelacs des stucs de Saint-Jean de Müstair," in *Frühmittelalterliche Kunst in den Alpenländern; Actes du IIIe Congrès international pour l'étude du haut moyen âge, 9—14 septembre 1951,* ed. Linus Birchler, Edgar Pelichet, and Alfred A. Schmid (Lausanne 1954), 267; Waldemar Grzimek, *Deutsche Stuckplastik, 800–1300* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1975), 46; Goll, "Relief," 216. The exception is Beutler, who dated the relief to the Carolingian period. Christian Beutler, *Bildwerke zwischen Antike und Mittelalter: Unbekannte Skulpturen aus der Zeit Karls des Grossen* (Dusseldorf: Schwann, 1964), 101–112.

[18] Norpert supported imperial interests throughout his tenure as bishop of Chur. He advocated for the deposition of the pope at the Synod in Bressanone in 1080. At the Synod in Quedlinburg in 1085, Norpert was singled out and praised for his support of the emperor. Iso Müller, *Die Herren von Tarasp* (Disentis: Desertina Verlag, 1980), 80–81; Otto Clavadetscher and Werner Kundert, "Das Bistum Chur," *Helvetia Sacra* 1, no. 1 (1972): 474.

member of a local noble family, the Tarasps. Berthold of Reichenau (d. ca. 1088) recorded in his contemporaneous chronicle that, following the death of Bishop Henry I (1070–1078), the episcopal seat of Chur remained vacant for over a year before the Salian emperor, Henry IV (1050–1106), finally succeeded in establishing the "greedy" Norpert in the seat against the wishes of both the local clergy and lay population, who preferred Ulrich.[19]

Norpert is credited with several artistic commissions at Müstair, though the historical record of his activity at the monastery is limited to a single diploma, which describes how he re-consecrated the cloister and several altars on August 14, 1087,[20] and a fragmentary, painted inscription in the north apse of the main church, which also documents the event.[21] Neither the diploma nor the painted inscription mention specific artistic commissions that accompanied the re-consecration, but Paul Deschamps and Wirth, among others, argued nevertheless that Norpert marked the occasion with the

[19] His etiam diebus Curiensi ecclesie, iam plus quam annum episcopo suo orbate, Nortpertum Augustensis ecclesie prepositum, symoniacum avarissimum, et quo sui erroris non facillime sibi parem consensorem adinvenire nequiverit, illo quem clerus, militia et populus ecclesie ipsius canonice elegerant eiusdem domus preposito, viro valde religioso, invitis et nolentibus universis violenter prefecit. Qui mox omnibus modis et artibus sue, ut semper solebat, avaritie suberat industrius. Berthold of Reichenau, *Chronicon*, ln. 14–20, ed. Ian S. Robinson, *SS rer. Germ. N.S.*14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 371. See also: Nortpertus, Augustensis praepositus, Curiensis ecclesiae praesul constituitur. O miseranda regni facies! Sicut in quodam comico Omnes sumus geminati legitur, papae geminati, pontifices geminati, reges geminati, duces sunt geminati! De ieiunio quatuor temporum scisma novum contra decreta pontificum et contra ecclesiasticam consuetudinem exoritur, sed a prudentibus respuitur et refellitur. *Annales Augustani*, ln. 2–4, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH SS* 3 (Hannover: 1839), 130.

[20] Anno domini millesimo LXXXVII dedicatum est hoc monasterium tunc temporis vocatum Tubris a venerabili Norperto Curiensis episcopo, XVIIII kl. Septembris in honore domini nostri Iesu Christi et victoriosissime cruces dei et genitricis Marie et sancti Iohannis Baptiste et sanctorum apostolorum Petri, Pauli, Andree, Thome et Bartholomei, sanctorum martirum Georii, Desiderii, Uigilii, Laurencii, Victoriani, Marcelli, Cassiani, sanctorum confessorum Benedicti, Florini et Zenonis, sanctarumque virginium Eulalie, Verene, quorum reliquie altari sunt imposite et aliorum date sunt XL dies criminalium et anni venialium omnibus pie hoc monasterium visitanibus in festo dedicacionis per octavas necnon festivitates sanctorum superius assignatas. Elisabeth Meyer-Marthaler and Franz Perret (eds.), *Bündner Urkundenbuch* (Chur: Bischofberger & Co, 1955), nr. 209.

[21] [hi]c DEniQVe[---] / [norp(er)t]VM Recon[ndite sunt ---] / [r]eLIQVIE S(an)C(t)o[rvm---] / MANV SVbTEr[---] / VIDELICet [---] /ANDRee ·□ioh[annis---] / mATEi evange[liste ---] / philippi marc[i ---] / […] eR[.]orandrv[.---]. Goll, Exner, and Hirsch, *Müstair*, 206.

construction of a new chancel barrier made from polychromed stucco reliefs of which the Baptism panel was a part.[22] The tendency to attribute artistic commissions to Norpert despite the lack of detail in the historical record has to do with the fact that during his episcopacy Norpert seems to have used the cloister as his main residence instead of residing in Chur. This placed him south of the Reschen Pass, while his political rivals, the Tarasps, had their main holdings north of the Pass.[23] The argument that the Baptism panel dates to Norpert's time is, therefore, plausible.

Wirth used stylistic comparisons between the Baptism panel, the stucco Charlemagne, and the St. Ulrich Chapel to date all three to the same period. There are also material and technical points of comparison. All three reliefs are made from gypsum from the same source, a quarry in the nearby Val Schais, and the raw gypsum was also prepared using a similar *hochgebrannte* technique.[24] The St. Ulrich Chapel, the Baptism panel, and the Charlemagne figure appear to constitute a group of artistic commissions produced at the same moment.

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[22] Over-eagerness to connect works of art to Norpert has led to at least one false attribution. A room on the ground floor on the north end of the bishop's residence contains a fresco cycle depicting events from the life of Christ. These frescoes were originally dated to the late eleventh century and the room was erroneously dubbed the "Norpertsaal." However, Gaby Weber re-dated the cycle to around 1170 based on the composition of the Deposition scene, where Mary stands behind the dead body of Christ and emotionally presses her cheek against his, a configuration that is thought to be a development in Byzantine and Italian painting that first occurred in the second half of the twelfth century. Gaby Weber, "Die romanischen Wandmalereien im Norpertsaal des Klosters St. Johann in Müstair," *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 64 (2007): 29-30.

[23] Müller, *Die Herren*, 81.

[24] Two processes for preparing raw gypsum, *niedriggebrannter* and *hochgebrannter*, vary according to the temperature at which the gypsum is baked before it is pulverized into dust. In general, *niedriggebrannter* stucco is prepared by baking gypsum at a temperature anywhere between 110 and 200° C to reduce the water bonded to the calcium sulfate to a quarter of the original amount. With *hochgebranntem* stucco, the gypsum is baked at a temperature between 800 and 1300° C to completely remove the water from the calcium sulfate until it becomes anhydrite $CaSO_4$. *Niedriggebrannter* stucco sets relatively quickly, sometimes within a matter of ten or fifteen minutes, while *hochgebrannter* stucco can take up to several days to fully set, but is harder and denser than stucco prepared using the *niedriggebrannte* technique. Goll, Plan, and Schönbächler, "Stuck ist Schmuck," 155; Jürg Goll, "Voûte décorée," in Sapin, *Le Stuc*, 215; Hermann Kühn, "Was ist Stuck? Arten – Zusammensetzung – Geschichtliches," in Exner, *Stuck des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, 18.

Like the reduced role of John the Baptist in the Baptism panel, Wirth understood the decision to commission a nearly life-size statue of a secular ruler and place it in the main church at Müstair as evidence of Norpert's politics. He did not ascribe a political interpretation to the reliefs in the St. Ulrich Chapel, but this chapter will suggest that the Chapel may also be understood as a response to the pressures of the Investiture Controversy in the late eleventh century. By maintaining a consistent form across his various projects, Norpert would have been able more effectively to claim credit for his commissions, and the shared medium would have also encouraged associations between the images in different locations within the monastery at Müstair.

Therefore, the chapter argues for a way in which stucco relief could be a bearer of meaning that is different from those suggested in the previous chapters, concluding that the repeated use of stucco in several contexts at Müstair meant that the medium became the visual signature of a patron and took on new connotations from the way it was used at a single site. The repeated use at Müstair turned stucco relief into a mediator, as Bruno Latour defined the concept: things that "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry."[25] By adopting stucco in the Chapel, Norpert added a new layer of political meaning to an otherwise standard composition: angels in a vault. This new meaning was only indirectly connected to the depicted subject matter and visual effects of the medium.

Formal Properties and Pictorial Content

Given the fact that the first three chapters have in one way or another argued for a connection between the visual effects of stucco relief and pictorial content, it is necessary

[25] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39. On the adaptation of Latour's theory to art historical studies of materiality see Lehmann, "The Matter of the Medium," 26–28.

to consider the possibility that a correspondence between medium and subject matter guided stucco's use in the St. Ulrich Chapel. However, in the context of eleventh-century Müstair this interpretation is unlikely. The variety of subjects rendered in stucco relief at the monastery — biblical on the chancel barrier, historical in the Charlemagne figure, and eschatological in the St. Ulrich Chapel — makes reconstructing a consistent pattern based on the relationship between the medium and subject matter untenable.

That is not to say that stucco relief was never used to reinforce pictorial content in the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries. The early twelfth-century decorative program in the Angels' Chapel at St-Chef provides a counter-example to the St. Ulrich Chapel. Four chapels dedicated to Sts. Theodore, Mary, Joseph, and Clement make up the transept of the abbey church at St. Chef, with the St. Theodore Chapel at the south end of the transept and the St. Clement Chapel at the north. The Angels' Chapel, which is dedicated to Christ, the archangels, and St. George, was built on top of the St. Clement Chapel. Beneath Christ in a mandorla, the apse in the Angels' Chapel depicts Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, along with St. George [Fig. 113].[26] George was differentiated from the angels by the fact that he has no wings and that his face was rendered in stucco relief [Fig. 114].[27] This is the only relief in the Chapel, and the juxtaposition of the

[26] CONSECRATU(M) EST HOC ALTA/RE IN ONORE S(OMI)N(I) NOSTRI IH(ES)U/XR <…> E(T) S(AN)C(TO)RU(M) ARCANGELORU(M)/MICHAELIS GABRIELIS ET RA/PHAELIS E(T) S(ANCTI) GEORGII MAR(TIRIS). The figures are named in a painted inscription beneath the apse's window. Franzé, *La Pierre et l'image,* 148–162.

[27] The face protrudes about two centimeters, and slight traces of color indicate that it would have been painted originally. Ibid. 164. Christian Sapin and Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon, "Monastère de Saint-Chef-en-Dauphiné," in Sapin, *Le Stuc*, 206.

fresco halo with the stucco face results in a strange image that resembles a mask embedded in the wall.[28]

The art-historical literature on St-Chef has yet to acknowledge how unusual the St. George stucco face is. To the best of my knowledge, the only scholars who have commented on it are Sapin and Palazzo-Bertholon, who suggested in a catalogue entry in *Le Stuc* that the distinction in medium signals that George, as a human saint, belongs to a more corporeal order of beings than the incorporeal angels.[29] Distinguishing between soldier saints and angels by using different stylistic modes (though not necessarily media) does occur in Late Antique and Byzantine art. In Kitzinger's canonical formal analysis of the stylistic modes used in the famous Late Antique Sinai icon of an enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by angels and soldier saints, he argued that the human figures were represented hieratically and statically, while the angels were rendered in a sketchier and more dynamic style to emphasize different orders of existence.[30] Henry Maguire has also argued that in Byzantium the formal properties adopted for soldier saints often emphasize physical strength and bodily presence.[31] Yet, if the goal was to emphasize George's corporeality at St-Chef, then why was the face alone rendered in relief and not the body?

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[28] The face is separated from the surrounding fresco halo by an incision that circumscribes the perimeter; the mark suggests that George's face may have been removed and re-set during the restorations of the church. Sapin and Palazzo-Bertholon considered the possibility that the face could belong to a later phase of painting, but ultimately favored the hypothesis that the face belongs to the early twelfth century and is contemporary with the frescoes in the chapel. Ibid; Franzé, *La Pierre et l'image,* 31–34.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ernst Kitzinger, "Byzantine Art in the Period between Justinian and Iconoclasm," in vol. 1 of *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinische-Kongress, München, 1958,* International Congress of Byzantine Studies 11 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1958), 47; Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 50–56.

[31] Henry Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 49–51, 74–78; idem., "Observations on the Icons of the West Façade of San Marco in Venice," in *Byzantine Icons: Art, Technique, and Technology*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Heraklion, Crete: Crete University Press, 2002), 305–306.

Sapin and Palazzo-Bertholon's general observation that relief was deployed to distinguish St. George from the angels is convincing, but the tactic seems to have been an exceptional artistic experiment that was not widely repeated beyond the Angels' Chapel.

The impulse to use two-dimensional and three-dimensional media to differentiate between celestial and terrestrial subjects at St-Chef provides a foil for the St. Ulrich's Chapel, where relief was used for both the angels in the vault and the saints on the sidewalls. At Müstair, relationships between the perceived corporeality of earthly subjects did not correlate with using a three-dimensional medium nor was the perceived incorporeality of heavenly subjects linked to a two-dimensional medium.[32]

To a modern viewer, it might be tempting to think that another formal property of stucco, its naturally white color, could be a reason to adopt stucco to depict angels, since white was often used to symbolize supernatural radiance in medieval art.[33] However, even though the figures inside the sanctuary of the St. Ulrich Chapel appear brilliant white today, a few hints of the original color scheme are preserved on the reliefs. Traces of red pigment are visible on some figures' hair and lips and on the outer rims of haloes [Fig. 115]. Evidence of blue-gray and red pigment is also preserved on the angels'

[32] In other contexts, relief was considered useful for representing insubstantial elements, as evinced by the practice of using stucco relief to depict haloes in frescoes. This occurred at the eighth-century church of San Salvatore in Brescia, where scars in the plaster around the heads of the Virgin and Christ on the north wall of the nave indicate that their haloes were originally rendered in raised relief and perhaps gilded. Struck unevenly by light, stucco relief may have been considered an appropriate medium for nimbi made from light. However, San Salvatore is an unusual early example. Most other surviving examples of stucco haloes in frescoes date to the thirteenth century or later, such as in the Neuwerk church in Goslar, the Dom in Braunschweig, the church of San Giovanni in Tubre/Taufers in Münstertal, and the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. Peroni, "Stucco, Pittura, e Sinopie," 61–64.

[33] Michel Pastoureau, *Une histoire symbolique du Moyen Âge occidental* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004), 149; Fabio Barry, "A Whiter Shade of Pale: Relative and Absolute White in Roman Sculpture and Architecture," in *Revival and Invention: Sculpture Through Its Material Histories*, ed. Sébastien Clerbois, and Martina Droth (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 34.

clothing [Fig. 116]. A red border follows the ribs of the vault, and the background retains bands of gray-green, yellow, and blue [Fig. 117].

Medieval texts that mention stucco often take it as a given that reliefs would be fully painted. Following Isidore of Seville, Hrabanus Maurus included applied color as part of his definition of sculpted relief (*de plastis*), describing it as the representation of "images and figures out of gypsum on walls and painting (*pingere*) them with colors."[34] The definition precedes two chapters on painting (*de pictura)* and color (*de coloribus*) more broadly conceived. The arranging of chapters on gypsum relief, painting, and color one after another suggests that the three topics were closely related in Hrabanus's mind.[35] Equally, the reference to "flowering stuccoes" in the *Catalogus abbatum Floriacensium*, discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter, could refer not only to the floral patterns of the reliefs at Germigny-des-Prés but also to their color scheme. Purchard of Reichenau's late tenth-century description of arches covered in "vernal flowers" made from gypsum, mentioned in the Introduction, creates a similarly vivid picture of the medium.

Stucco reliefs with their polychromy largely intact substantiate the idea that applied color was an indispensible component of the medium in the early Middle Ages. For instance, the tenth-century half-length portrait of Saint Ambrose in a roundel in Milan retains much of its polychromy [see Fig. 8].[36] Though the present paint may have been renewed in later centuries, it likely conforms to the original color scheme. The natural color of the stucco is a light beige-brown, now visible in areas where the paint has

[34] Plastice est parietum ex gypso effigies signaque exprimere, pingereque coloribus. Hrabanus Maurus, *De Universo libri viginti duo*, 20.8, ed. J.P. Migne, *PL* 111 (Paris: 1852), col. 563C.

[35] Meier, "Ton, Stein, Stuck," 40.

[36] Corgnati, *L'arte dello stucco,* 102–104.

flaked off, though none of the plaster would have been initially exposed. Traces of pigment suggest that the entire background was once bright blue. Ambrose's skin, which could have conceivably been left blank, was painted a pale flesh color, only slightly different in tone from the underlying plaster [Fig. 118]. Moreover, such details as the irises and eyebrows are rendered solely in paint; if the polychromy were removed, these features would disappear. In other words, the figure would seem incomplete without the paint to fill in essential details. That it was standard practice to paint medieval stucco is also illustrated by the extant polychromy on the Baptism panel at Müstair [see Fig. 109].[37] Following convention, the reliefs in the St. Ulrich Chapel were also probably fully colored, meaning that the naturally white color of the reliefs would not have been a reason to adopt the medium since the color would have been obscured. A different rationale must have guided the selection of stucco relief in the St. Ulrich Chapel.

The Ideological Function of the St. Ulrich Chapel

Wirth made a persuasive case for dating the stucco reliefs in the St. Ulrich Chapel's sanctuary to the end of the eleventh century, but this date is not universally accepted (see the Appendix to this study). To understand part of the reason why the date is uncertain, it is necessary to consider the various components of the Chapel's architecture, since the nave, sanctuary, and decorative program each belong to different campaigns. The St. Ulrich Chapel's nave (highlighted in blue in Fig. 95) is contemporary with the rest of the bishop's residence (in pink), which has been dated by dendrochronological analysis to shortly after 1035, during the episcopacy of Bishop

[37] The polychromy came to light during a cleaning in 1951 and appears to be original. Grzimek, *Deutsche Stuckplastik*, 46.

Hartmann I (1030–1039).[38] In contrast, the sanctuary (in green) was added at a later date and the decorative program inside the sanctuary still later.[39] The construction sequence will be relevant to understanding the choice of stucco as the medium for the decorative program in the Chapel's sanctuary, since the stucco in the St. Ulrich Chapel is later in date than the fresco decoration in the St. Nicholas Chapel; the later reliefs may be interpreted as responses to the earlier paintings. For this reason, it is worth taking the time here to describe the construction phases in detail.

Before the St. Ulrich Chapel's sanctuary was built, the nave opened directly onto the courtyard through an arched portal, flanked by mullioned windows.[40] Jürg Goll has suggested that the portal was in alignment with another open atrium across the courtyard, leading into the north aisle of the main church [Fig. 119].[41] In this way, there would have been an axial relationship between the bishop's residence and the church. Persons could have left the west wing through the open portal, walked across the courtyard, and entered the north aisle of St. John's through the corresponding door in the courtyard's east wing. The subsequent construction of the sanctuary, however, sealed off this axis. The fact that the sanctuary was a modification to the chapel's original plan is clear in how the walls partially block the portal's earlier mullioned windows [see Fig. 96].

The sanctuary was built sometime between 1040 and 1070. This date comes from a painted inscription on the earliest layer of plaster in the apse of the St. Nicholas Chapel, which records that the altar in the upper chapel was consecrated on the ninth of June in an

[38] Goll, Exner, and Hirsch, *Müstair*, 33.

[39] Hans Rudolf Sennhauser and Jürg Goll, "Müstair, Ausgrabung und Bauuntersuchung im Kloster St. Johann," *Jahresberichte des Archäologischen Dienstes Graubünden und Denkmalpflege Graubünden* (1999): 11-12.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Goll, Exner, and Hirsch, *Müstair*, 33.

unspecified year during the episcopacy of Thietmar, who was the bishop of Chur from 1040 until 1070.[42] The apse of the St. Nicholas Chapel sits directly on top of and is in phase with the architecture of the lower sanctuary. There is no evidence that stucco relief was ever used in the St. Nicholas Chapel, which appears to have been decorated primarily in fresco.[43] The nature of the original frescoes is difficult to reconstruct, though a perspectival meander ran along the top of the walls and the lowest register of the space may have featured panels of fictive marble.

The stucco reliefs in the St. Ulrich Chapel's sanctuary are later in date than the architecture.[44] When the sanctuary was first built, the walls and vault were covered in a plain coat of flat plaster, parts of which is still visible on the sidewalls [Fig. 120]. How much time elapsed between the first coat of plaster and the later addition of the reliefs is unknown.

To summarize, the St. Ulrich Chapel was the product of at least three separate building campaigns. The initial construction of the nave as a part of the bishop's residence occurred around 1035 under Bishop Hartmann I. The second campaign involved the construction of the sanctuary under Bishop Thietmar sometime between 1040 and 1070. During this second phase, the walls of the sanctuary were treated with a

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[42] HĘC ·□□CLESI[A] [DE]DICATA· EST ·□A TIET / MARO· VEN[ER]ANDO · CVRIENSI · EPO · / · V · IDIVNII IN HONORE · SCĘ ·□CRVCIS· ET / ET SCĘ · MARIĘ ET SCI · NICOLAI · CONF · [R]VODPERTI · CONF · ER[I]NDVDIS ·□VIR[G] / QVORV· R[E]LIQVIĘ · HIC ·□HABENTV[R].□ The upper chapel was dedicated to the Holy Cross, the Virgin Mary, Nicholas of Myra, Rupert, and Erentrud, whose relics were deposited in the altar. In 1999, the altar was opened and several relics were found sealed inside a sixteenth-century glass vessel. The glass vessel likely dates from 1512, when Bishop Stephen of Chur rededicated the altars in both the St. Nicholas and St. Ulrich Chapels. Parchment labels written in an eleventh-century hand identified the relics as belonging to St. Nicholas and St. Erentrudis. Hans Rudolf Sennhauser, "St. Johann in Müstair als Klosterpfalz," in Sennhauser, *Kloster, Pfalz, Klosterpfalz*, 21; Sennhauser and Goll, "Müstair, Ausgrabung, und Bauuntersuchung," (1999): 12.

[43] Sennhauser and Goll, "Müstair, Ausgrabung, und Bauuntersuchung," (2001): 22.

[44] Goll, Plan, and Schönbächler, "Stuck ist Schmuck," 154.

flat coat of wall plaster, but not reliefs. Finally, the third campaign, which gave the sanctuary its present artistic program, occurred at a still later time.

While the architecture of the St. Nicholas and St. Ulrich Chapels' sanctuaries is contemporaneous, the decorative programs are not, indicating that the two spaces were probably consecrated at different times.[45] That the room beneath the St. Nicholas Chapel's apse, which eventually became the St. Ulrich Chapel's sanctuary, was initially undecorated and unconsecrated would not have been particularly unusual. Examples of two-story chapels in other bishops' residences exist, where only the upper floor contained an altar. A lower story could be used, instead, as a space to meet with the laity,[46] to perform administrative tasks,[47] or to store liturgical objects and vestments.[48] However, the sequence of construction and consecration for the St. Nicholas and St. Ulrich Chapels raises questions about the motivations behind the decision to consecrate the lower space. Why was a second altar necessary when another already existed in the space directly above it? Can the decision to transform the lower floor into a chapel be interpreted as a response to the upper chapel? If so, does the later chapel complement or compete with the earlier?

In her work on Italian bishops' palaces in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, Miller argued that chapels in episcopal residences were, for the most part, functionally

[45] Sennhauser and Goll, "Müstair, Ausgrabung, und Bauuntersuchung," (1999): 12.

[46] In the bishop's chapel in Anagni (late eleventh century), the ground floor of the chapel was used as a reception room for pilgrims and guests. Miller, *The Bishop's Palace*, 216.

[47] The room beneath the bishop's chapel in Piacenza was used to notarize documents. Ibid., 232, 241–242.

[48] In the chapel of San Niccolò in the Lateran, the lower story was used as a sacristy. Likewise, the lower story of the episcopal chapel in Pistoia (1170s) also housed a *vestiarium*. Ibid., 233; Mary Stroll, *Calixtus II (1119-1124): A Pope Born to Rule* (New York: Brill, 2004), 451–452.

unnecessary.[49] Most residences were attached to larger churches, often cathedrals, and so the bishop already had a place to pray and celebrate Mass connected to his home, making the construction of a new chapel directly inside a residence redundant. The fact that chapels in bishops' residences are rare before the year 1000 supports Miller's argument that a chapel was not a mandatory component of every residence. When chapels do occur in early residences, they were often additions to preexisting structures built at historical moments of conflict when bishops needed to assert their authority or orthodoxy. Miller further pointed out that the number of new chapels incorporated into older episcopal residences increased in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and she connected the trend to the Investiture Controversy and Gregorian Reform.[50] For these reasons, chapels in bishops' residences can often be understood more as ideological statements than functional necessities.

The St. Nicholas and St. Ulrich Chapels follow many of the patterns that Miller identified in her study. The bishop's residence in Müstair was built next to the preexisting church of St. Johann as well as to a Carolingian chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross, which stands to the south of the main church [Fig. 121].[51] There was, then, no real need for another altar at Müstair, much less two. Moreover, neither the St. Nicholas Chapel nor the St. Ulrich Chapel were part of the original plan for the residence, but were each added at later dates. Finally, even though the St. Nicholas Chapel may be slightly

[49] Miller, *The Bishop's Palace*, 217.

[50] Ibid.

[51] The Holy Cross Chapel has been dated using dendrochronological analysis to sometime shortly after 788. Jürg Goll, "Bau und Gestalt der Heiligkreuzkapelle," in *Die mittelalterlichen Wandmalereien im Kloster Müstair. Grundlagen zur Konservierung und Pflege; Akten der Tagung in Müstair von 1998, Zürich 2002 (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Denkmalpflege an der ETH Zürich, Band 22),* ed. Alfred Wyss, Hans Rutishauser, and Marc Antoni Nay (Zurich: vdf Hochschulverlag AG an der ETH, 2002), 173n6; idem. "Müstair, monastero di San Giovanni: la Cappella della Santa Croce," in Pace, *L'VIII secolo*, 259.

too early for the political pressures of the Investiture Controversy to have motivated its commission, the St. Ulrich Chapel likely belongs to this period. If Norpert was the patron, then the commission could be interpreted as an attempt to shore up his authority at a moment when, as Berthold of Reichenau's chronicle illustrates, his standing as a bishop was contested.

The hypothesis is supported by the Chapel's dedication. Both Nicholas and Ulrich were prominent bishop-saints, but they exhibit different relationships to secular rulers in their respective *vitae*. In one early version of Nicholas' life, the fourth-century bishop of Myra confronts Emperor Constantine in a dream and threatens to stir up revolt and feed the emperor's carcass to wild animals.[52] Nicholas' willingness to confront an emperor made him an important exemplar for bishops during the Investiture Controversy and popular with reformers like Peter Damian (1007–1072/3).[53] In 1122, Pope Calixtus II even dedicated a chapel to Nicholas in the Lateran to celebrate the end of the Investiture Controversy.[54] Ulrich's interactions with rulers in his *vita* were more collegial than Nicholas'. The earliest life of St. Ulrich was written shortly after his death in the late tenth century by his contemporary, Gerhard, a monk in Augsburg.[55] A copy of this life was kept in St. Afra in Augsburg, and it is possible that Norpert may have been familiar with it, since he had been the cathedral provost in that city before becoming bishop of Chur.[56] The life portrays Ulrich as respectfully receiving imperial vassals and

[52] Miller, *The Bishop's Palace*, 235. Charles W. Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bari, and Manhattan: Biography of a Legend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 34.

[53] Ibid.; Ibid., 159-160.

[54] Miller, *The Bishop's Palace,* 235.

[55] Walter Berschin and Angelika Häse (ed. and trans.), Vita Sancti Uodalrici: *Die älteste Lebensbeschreibungen des heiligen Ulrich*, Editiones Heidelbergensis 24 (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1993), 8.

[56] Ibid.

messengers, as well as refusing the pope's initial request that he become a bishop.[57] John Eldevik has pointed out that the earliest version of Ulrich's life presented such a positive picture of the bishop's relationship with secular rulers that later copyists edited out these details; they were apparently "uncomfortable with certain aspects of Ulrich's relationship with the imperial court and army and sought to downplay those aspects of the *vita* which had previously emphasized them."[58] Another reason to connect St. Ulrich to an emperor could be the fact that Otto III's entrails were interred in the chapel of St. Ulrich in the church of St. Afra in Augsburg.[59] A famous portrait in the Sacramentary of Henry II shows the emperor crowned by Christ while Ulrich and another bishop-saint, Emmeram, assist him by raising his arms as he holds the royal insignia of the lance and sword [Fig. 122].[60] The decision to dedicate the lower chapel at Müstair to Ulrich, a bishop who maintained good relationships with secular rulers, could have been motivated by a desire to balance out the dedication of the earlier chapel to Nicholas, an antagonist of emperors, and to express Norpert's imperial allegiances.

If the St. Ulrich's Chapel was intended as an ideological expression of Norpert's politics, then it would be significant that the decorative program in the Chapel resembles the vault in the oratory of Sant'Andrea in the episcopal palace in Ravenna, which, as described above, was patterned after the Santa Croce Chapel in the Lateran [see Fig.

[57] Ibid., 37, 95.

[58] John Eldevik, *Episcopal Power and Ecclesiastical Reform in the German Empire: Tithes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 59.

[59] Eliza Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture: The Artistic Patronage of Otto III and Henry II* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 3.

[60] The choice of St. Emmeram has to do with the fact that the Sacramentary was produced in Regensburg, where Henry II was educated. The composition of a king with his arms supported by bishops has roots in the biblical story of Moses with his arms supported by Aaron and Hur. Evan Gatti, "Building the Body of the Church: A Bishop's Blessing in the Benedictional of Engilmar of Parenzo," in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 109; Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art*, 146.

104]. By imitating a famous chapel in the Lateran, the sixth-century bishop of Ravenna, Peter II, affirmed his episcopal authority and orthodoxy at a time when the Arian ruler Theodoric was also commissioning numerous works of art and architecture in the city.[61] In turn, Norpert may have affirmed his right to the episcopal seat, in spite of the fact that his politics put him at odds with Rome, by imitating earlier episcopal chapels. It should be said, though, that the St. Ulrich Chapel does not perfectly reproduce the vaults from Late Antique Rome and Ravenna. In the Late Antique versions, the angels occupy the ribs of the vault and the creatures the wings. In the Romanesque version, the arrangement follows the reverse distribution of subjects; the angels are in the wings and creatures in the corners. The use of stucco also sets the St. Ulrich Chapel apart from its potential models.

The relative chronology of the decorative programs and consecration of the St. Nicholas and St. Ulrich Chapels is, therefore, necessary to understanding the relationship between the two spaces. Unfortunately, since the original frescoes in the St. Nicholas Chapel are largely lost, thematic progressions between the decorative programs in the upper and lower chapels are impossible to reconstruct. The fact that no archaeological evidence of stucco relief has been uncovered in the upper chapel is nonetheless noteworthy. With the upper sanctuary executed exclusively in fresco and the lower sanctuary largely in stucco, the difference in media would have resulted in a pronounced visual discrepancy between the two spaces. Like the dedication to St. Ulrich, the adoption of a different medium in the lower chapel could have served to distinguish the later commission from the earlier.

[61] Miller, *The Bishop's Palace*, 222.

The other two figural stucco reliefs at Müstair — the stucco Baptism panel and Charlemagne figure — also seem to respond to earlier frescoes at Müstair and nearby sites. The Baptism panel could be interpreted as a reprise of a fresco of the same scene in the main church, which occurs in the third register of the south wall of the Carolingian fresco cycle [Fig. 123].[62] This location of the Baptism of Christ fresco places the scene on the boundary between the nave and the apses, in line with where a chancel barrier would have stood. In the painted version, Christ appears in a mountain of water at the center of the composition, accompanied by a highly deteriorated angel to his left, John the Baptist to his right, and the dove of the Holy Spirit above his nimbus. John the Baptist touches Christ's head in the fresco, but in most other ways, the compositions of the fresco and the stucco relief parallel each other. The stucco Charlemagne statue may also have an earlier referent in the fresco donor portrait of a secular ruler from San Benedetto in Malles, which lies only twenty kilometers east, down the Val Müstair from Müstair. The Malles fresco and Müstair relief resemble each other in the rendering of the beard and clothing, suggesting that the makers of the later statue may have been familiar with the earlier fresco [see Fig. 87].[63] Therefore, the stucco reliefs echo earlier compositions in fresco but transmute them into a new medium.

As outlined in the Introduction, the plaster-based material and extensive use of color on medieval stucco reliefs has led some historians of medieval art to classify stucco as a subgenre of wall painting.[64] Referring to stucco reliefs as "three-dimensional paintings" has become a repeated practice in the art historical literature. The three

[62] Goll, Exner, and Hirsch, *Müstair*, 145.

[63] Wirth, "Bemerkungen zu den Stifterbildern," 82.

[64] Möller, "Zur Farbigkeit," 90.

examples of figural stucco sculpture from Müstair introduce a new variation on the concept of stucco relief as three-dimensional painting by transposing pictorial content and compositions known in fresco or mosaic into a sculptural medium. The transposition served to set the later group of images apart from their models. At the same time, the repeated use of the same medium would have connected the St. Ulrich Chapel, the Baptism panel, and the Charlemagne figure, allowing them to be interpreted together as a group, reflecting Norpert's politics as an imperial sympathizer during the Investiture Controversy.

It is difficult to gage how intentional Norpert's development of a visual signature based on the use of stucco relief was. The most straightforward explanation for the use of stucco relief in the eleventh century at Müstair would be that Norpert simply had access to artisans who were capable of working in stucco and he genuinely liked the medium, so he selected it for these three artistic projects. However, intentional or coincidental, the medium gained this valence of meaning as the patron's visual signature through its repeated use.

Medium and Memory

Another consequence of the recursive use of stucco at Müstair is the fact that the medium would have encouraged associations between the spaces in which it was used. Even though it was not possible to see the stucco chancel screen and Charlemagne figure in the main church at the same time as the reliefs in the bishop's residence, the recurrence of the medium would have facilitated a link between the church and the residence by engaging the memories of viewers who may have seen the stucco in both locations.

The church San Pietro al Monte in Civate provides another example of a late eleventh-century site where the repeated use of stucco relief would have engaged viewers' memories and encouraged connections between disparate spaces.[65] The frescoes and stucco reliefs in San Pietro al Monte were made at the end of the eleventh century, possibly after 1093 when the Archbishop of Milan, Arnulf III, may have taken up residence at the monastery.[66] Civate and Müstair belonged to the same general orbit in the early Middle Ages. Both monasteries were at times part of the metropolitan see of Milan, and both were included in the Pfäfers *Liber viventium*, which lists the names of monks from a number of connected transalpine monasteries.[67]

Adriano Peroni described the late eleventh-century decorative program in the abbey church of San Pietro al Monte at Civate as "un esempio clamoroso di complementarità tra pittura e stucco."[68] The complementarity between painting and stucco is most apparent on the counter façade over the west entrance, which displays an apocalyptic scene [Fig. 124].[69] The vision is depicted on a large tympanum set over three vaults. The arches of the vaults and of the tympanum itself are lined in ornamental stucco. A polychromed medallion containing a Lamb in stucco sits at the apex of the

[65] The church has an atypical architectural plan, with apses at both the east and west ends. The arrangement was probably inspired by the dual function of the building as both a monastic and a pilgrimage church. Juliette Rollier-Hanselmann, "Ecclésiologie clunisienne et parcours liturgique: Berzé-La-Ville, Civate, et Anzy-Le-Duc," in *Espace ecclésial* et *liturgie au Moyen Âge*, ed. Anne Baud and Alessandra Antonini (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée-Jean Pouilloux, 2010), 218.

[66] Müller, *Omnia in mensura,* 330–354.

[67] Ibid., 19; Anton von Euw, *Liber Viventium Fabariensis: Das karolingische Memorialbuch von Pfäfers in seiner liturgie- und kunstgeschichtlichen Bedeutung* (Bern: Francke, 1989), 16; On the diocese of Chur joining and leaving the see of Milan see Ivan Foletti, "Del vero volto di Ambrogio: Riflessioni sul mosaico absidale di Sant'Ambrogio a Milano in epoca carolingia," *Arte lombarda* 166 (2012): 6–7.

[68] Adriano Peroni, "San Pietro al Monte di Civate o l'apogeo del rapporto tra pittura e stucco," in Sapin, *Stucs et Décors,* 286.

[69] Müller, *Omnia in mensura*, 96.

tympanum. In contrast, the interior of the tympanum is executed largely in fresco. Christ in Majesty enthroned in a mandorla occupies the center of the composition. He is surrounded by a host of spear-carrying angels, who attack the dragon from Revelation 12:7–9 beneath their feet. To Christ's right, the woman from Revelation 12:1–6, personifying the church, offers up a child, symbolizing the devout.[70]

One element of the scene was not rendered in fresco, namely the face of Christ, which is now missing. Originally, the face was modeled in stucco and inserted into the surrounding fresco by means of hooks or nails.[71] Kessler has argued that the face of the Civate Christ is the earliest of a handful of decorative programs in Italy that portray Christ by inserting the face on a separate support to drive home the point that viewers were only seeing a representation, not the real thing.[72] At Civate, the stucco medallion that constituted Christ's face was echoed in the medallion of the Lamb directly above it. The identical size, shape, and material of the two elements, as well as their proximity to each other, would have invited a direct comparison between the iconic and the emblematic forms. That the Lamb medallion occurs as an adornment on the edges of the painting would have emphasized the fact that the corresponding medallion of Christ's face was also an added embellishment. The contrast between a three-dimensional medallion and the surrounding two-dimensional fresco declared the images' artifactural

[70] Rollier-Hanselmann, "Ecclésiologie clunisienne," 219.

[71] Adriano Peroni, "Teste a sé stanti nell'arte medievale: Tradizione e riuso," in *Medioevo: Il tempo degli antichi; Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, 24–28 settembre 2003*, ed. Arturo Quintavalle, I convegni di Parma 6 (Milan: Electa, 2006), 248; idem., "San Pietro al Monte di Civate," 290; Müller, *Omnia in mensura*, 213.

[72] Herbert L. Kessler, "Real Absence: Early Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision," in vol. 2 of *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo, 3–9 aprile 1997*, ed. Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 45 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1998), 1202.

nature to viewers and was designed to inspire a sense of longing for the absent archetype.[73]

A stucco medallion was also used to represent the face of Christ on the exterior arch over the entrance to the church at Civate, which displays a *Traditio legis* scene. The original stucco medallion is now missing, and the face was painted in during the course of a modern restoration campaign [Fig. 125].[74] Having two stucco portraits of Christ's face, one over the entrance and one on the counter façade, turned the images into a complementary pair, bookending the entrance. As described in Chapter One, the *Traditio legis* represents Christ at the Second Coming, tightening the thematic link between the façade and counter façade.[75] Both façades present an image of Christ as he was expected to be revealed at the End of Time, making the need to underscore the images' identities as representations and not true revelations by means of the inserted medallions all the more important. Moreover, the stucco medallions did not merely inspire a sense of longing for the absent archetype, but the repetition of the form also enabled a connection between distinct spaces as visitors moved through the building. The matched approaches engaged the memories of pilgrims by providing them with parallel visions of Christ at the beginning of their visit when they entered the building and at the end when they left. Like the various examples of figural stucco relief in Müstair, the two stucco medallions

[73] Ibid. Kessler's interpretation is repeated by Müller, *Omnia in mensura*, 216. This interpretation resonates with the use of gypsum in Guibert of Nogent's *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus* discussed in the Introduction, where Guibert's identification of the material of a gypsum crucifix categorized the crucifix as a manufactured object. By using a three-dimensional stucco medallion for Christ's face, the makers of the Civate counter façade also announced the image's status as a man-made representation.

[74] Peroni, "San Pietro al Monte di Civate," 290.

[75] Foletti and Quadri, "Roma, l'Oriente, e il mito," 32.

of Christ's face at Civate built a dialogue between locations within the same site that could not be viewed simultaneously but had to be remembered.

The comparison between Civate and Müstair is admittedly imperfect; the Civate stucco medallions both represent the same subject, Christ's face, while the three figural stucco reliefs at Müstair each represent different subjects. In fact, the only thing that really links the reliefs at Müstair is their shared medium. Read individually, even the potential references to Norpert's politics are subtle: John the Baptist's reduced role in the Baptism scene, the placement of a figure of a secular ruler in the center of a church, and the decision to dedicate the Chapel to St. Ulrich and possibly imitate earlier episcopal chapels. However, united by their shared medium and interpreted in concert, the three reliefs mutually reinforce each other. By association with the Baptism panel and the Charlemagne in the main church, the St. Ulrich Chapel's array of angels, tetramorphs, and saints gains force as a political statement. The medium of stucco relief becomes a mediator in Latour's sense, imbuing the decorative program in the St. Ulrich Chapel with a new layer of meaning that it would not have necessarily carried had it been rendered in fresco.

Conclusions

By commissioning works of art that repeated visual formulas known in fresco but executing them in stucco relief, Norpert was able to both claim earlier models and deviate from them. It also meant that he maintained a consistent visual idiom across three different artistic projects that he commissioned. This chapter has, therefore, argued for a way in which an artistic medium could be a carrier of extra-iconographical meaning in art based on that medium's role as a common denominator between disparate groups of

images. By providing a reason to link biblical, historical, and eschatological subjects in different spaces in Müstair, three works of art, otherwise only connected by a common patron, mutually inflected each other's meaning. The case of the St. Ulrich Chapel illustrates how there could be many different reasons a particular artistic medium might be selected over others in medieval monuments, and these reasons were not always directly related to subject matter or the visual effects exclusive to that medium.

Conclusion

This dissertation began by pointing out the fact that the use of monumental figural sculpture in stone on the exteriors of buildings diminished in the early Middle Ages, but figural sculpture in stucco remained a prevalent art form throughout the same period. A continuous tradition does not, however, mean uniform use between the fifth and eleventh centuries. Often marginalized as an inexpensive substitute for stone sculpture or as a subgenre of wall painting, stucco sculpture needs to be understood as a distinctive artistic medium in its own right, capable of creating effects and conveying meanings that other artistic media could not. Stucco relief was versatile in its applications and, depending on how it was manipulated, contextualized, and installed, connoted a range of meanings.

As the present study has demonstrated, stucco has numerous properties that could potentially carry meaning. Stucco, wax, and clay were all fictile materials and, as such, could evoke such archetypal creation narratives as Prometheus sculpting man out of clay or the Judeo-Christian God modeling the first man from mud. Literary sources often placed stucco and clay, as inexpensive and friable substances, in binary opposition to silver and gold; they could connote notions of earthly existence and the body, while costly and luminous metals signified the opposite, heaven and the soul. Stucco was also one of the few widely available substances in the Middle Ages whose natural color had the potential to approach a degree of whiteness close to the biblical "white as snow" ideal.[1] However, this connection was almost never made, since most medieval stucco

[1] Stucco can sometimes take on tints of pink or brown depending on the quality of the raw lime or gypsum and on impurities in the sand or pulverized stone that are mixed into the plaster. Mineral inclusions can also add dark speckles to the appearance of an otherwise white relief. Michel Pastoureau has argued that pure white was more of a symbolic concept in literature than a real possibility in art objects in the Middle

reliefs tended to be fully polychromed.[2] Indeed, the medieval practice of painting and gilding stucco has meant that some texts describe figures modeled "*ex gipso*" as shining, precious, and variegated and place the medium alongside gold and glass mosaic in terms of its value. Such admiration for the medium's sumptuous qualities belies stucco's humble nature as a friable and ephemeral material that was fast and inexpensive to produce. Stucco, therefore, could lend itself to a spectrum of associations, both positive and negative. In the four monuments analyzed in this dissertation, the medium was by turns associated with archetypal creation narratives, deployed to articulate a fundamental difference between divine and earthly modes of existence, used to simulate a sense of antiquity, and adopted as the visual signature of single patron.

What has unified the project is a central concern with materials and media as bearers of meaning in art. At several points, the study has differentiated an iconology of matter (the physical substances from which works of art are made) from an iconology of medium (the techniques used to shape and present those substances to viewers).[3] But

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Ages. For instance, despite countless literary allusions to garments that were "white as snow," technologies for bleaching textiles in the Middle Ages were quite limited. Pastoureau, *Une histoire symbolique*, 182–183.

[2] videmus enim quod album generatur a frigido in nive. In gypso autem et calce generatur a calido. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, 3.62. This passage from Vincent of Beauvais's encyclopedia (ca. 1244) is the only medieval text I have found so far that explicitly compares the color of gypsum to snow. Vincent used the comparison to argue against the popular theory that color was solely a function of heat/light (*calor*). For Vincent, color was produced from a combination of factors (the chapter heading for this section of his encyclopedia is: *de colorum generatione multiplici*). These factors included both light and material. I am unaware of any critical editions of this text, though numerous manuscripts have been digitized and made available online. For the Latin, I consulted the copy of the *Speculum naturale* in the Bayerisches Staatsbibliothek in Munich. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale,* (Straßburg: not after 1481). http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00072896/image_88. The text came to my attention from Herman Pleij, *Colors Demonic and Divine: Shades of Meaning in the Middle Ages and After,* trans. Diane Webb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 10. Pleij did not provide the Latin or the information necessary to locate the passage; he only mentioned that Vincent's argument existed without providing a citation.

[3] The ways in which art historians define the differences between material and medium can vary. William Diebold, for example, has stated: "Medium, technique, and material, while related, are not the same thing. Although I am particularly interested in this paper in the iconology of medium, I also touch in the following

truly separating material from medium is virtually impossible, since the nature of a material determines what artistic processes and strategies can most effectively be brought to bear on it.

Ann-Sophie Lehmann has recently formulated a theory of materials in which she adopted the term "affordances" from psychologist James J. Gibson, as a way of grappling with the connection between materials and media. Lehmann explained:

> The concept of affordances signifies that the properties of a thing, a substance or material encourage the performance of particular actions with them. Hence, the earth offers us the possibility to walk upon it…; a chair affords us the possibility to sit in it…; stones afford not only the ability to build houses, but the destruction of shelter as well. This final example is important, for the affordances of a particular thing or substance should by no means be confused with the demand for a 'truth to materials' voice by the Arts and Crafts movement and the German Werkbund around 1900, both of which were highly charged with idealistic notions about 'right' and 'wrong' applications of materials.[4]

The application of Lehmann's theory of the affordances of artistic materials to medieval art has particular appeal, not least because it resonates with the idea that a single material could signify contrary concepts, *ad bonam partem* or *ad malam partem*, depending on how it was contextualized and used. Moreover, medieval works of art regularly prioritize the reality of the object over the mimesis of the image, making recognition of matter an essential part of a viewer's experience and interpretation.[5] This

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pages, on technique and material. This, in large part, is because the Carolingian sources do not rigorously distinguish among the three terms. In contrast to medium, more attention has been devoted, especially recently, to the iconological significance of the materials of medieval art." Diebold, "Medium as Message," 200n2.

[4] Lehmann, "The Matter of the Medium," 31–32; In this, Lehmann was again heavily influenced by Ingold, who also uses Gibson's theory of affordances, though he is critical of what he perceives to be a self-contradictory aspect of Gibson's reasoning, namely the question of whether the affordances of an environment can exist independently of the people and animals that inhabit it or if an environment and its inhabitants are mutually constitutive of each other. Ingold observes: "Having begun by assuring us that 'an environment implies an animal (or at least an organim) to be surrounded,' Gibson goes on to assert, with equal assurance but quite to the contrary that 'the envionment does not depend on the organism for its existence.'" Ingold, *Being Alive*, 79.

[5] Herbert Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 2004), 19ff.

attention to matter had to do, in part, with an intense awareness of the opposite, the existence of an invisible, spiritual world beyond sensory perception. The need to know about things of a spiritual nature paradoxically drove medieval viewers of art to examine things of a material nature. As Caroline Bynum has demonstrated, in the Middle Ages the material world could be a means of accessing the spiritual world because matter was the locus where spiritual action occurred.[6] To borrow Lehmann's wording, matter afforded an opportunity for spiritual action to take place. As a result, medieval engagement with art was profoundly physical, and attention to matter entailed attention to the various transformations enabled and invited by materials.

In fact, for many makers and viewers of medieval art, it was not so much inert matter but the actions, whether human or divine, to which matter was subjected that were most meaningful. Romans 9:21 provided biblical validation for the model: "Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one object for special use and another for ordinary use?" In this metaphor, it was not the passive clay that determined the final value of the crafted vessel, but the decisions and manipulations to which the artist subjected the material. Guibert of Nogent quoted this passage in his account of the plaster crucifix in *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus*, discussed in the Introduction, but there is a longer tradition of Late Antique and medieval exegesis on the passage, which consistently locates meaning in the use of the clay, rather than in the material. In this exegetical tradition, the clay signified the physical human body and the actions of the

[6] Caroline Bynum has emphasized the importance of matter subjected to action in her book on Christian materiality. Focusing on the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, Bynum explored late medieval attitudes toward holy matter by examining miracle accounts in which matter is transformed from one state into another. However, Bynum focused exclusively on transformations resulting from such divine action as the miraculous transformation of the Host. My work has demonstrated that material transformations enacted by human artisans could also be sources of meaning. Caroline Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011).

potter symbolized human will, divine action, or both. Jerome used the metaphor to describe the varying degrees of spiritual maturity among the members of the Church as well as how the Virgin Mary was elevated above other human beings by divine action: she was "blessed not by her own merit and virtue, but by the mercy of God dwelling in her."[7] Augustine likewise used it to describe how an act of human will debased humanity but divine grace elevated it; actions could change the value of a person, though there was no change in the material.

> If this lump were so positioned in the middle that, as it merited nothing good, so it merited nothing bad, it would seem with good reason to be an injustice that vessels were made from it for dishonor. But since the whole lump fell into condemnation because of the one sin through the free choice of the first human being, the fact that vessels are made from it for honor is not due to his righteousness, because no righteousness preceded grace, but to the mercy of God.[8]

Writing around the same time as Guibert of Nogent, Peter Abelard used Romans 9:21 to describe how people performed different roles in their lives, some good and some bad, though on a material level they were all the same: "And this from the same lump of earth,

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[7]aut non habet figulus potestatem de eodem luto aliud uas facere in honorem, aliud in contumeliam? unde consequenter adiecit: aemulamini dona maiora, ut fide et industria plus ceteris charismatibus habere mereamur meliores que simus his, qui comparatione nostri in secundo uel tertio gradu positi sunt. in domo magna uasa diuersa sunt, alia aurea, alia argentea, aenea, ferrea, lignea que, et tamen secundum modulum suum, cum aeneum uas perfectum sit, comparatione argentei uasis imperfectum dicitur, rursum que argenteum aurei collatione deterius est, atque hoc modo, dum sibi inuicem comparantur, imperfecta et perfecta omnia. … ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes, quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius, et misericordia eius in progenies et progenies timentibus eum. fecit potentiam in brachio suo. in quo animaduerte quod beatam se esse dicat, non proprio merito atque uirtute, sed dei in se habitantis clementia. Jerome, *Dialogi contra Pelagianos libri iii,* 1.17.43, ed. C. Moreschini *CCSL* 80 (1990); trans. W.H. Fremantle, *The Principle Works of St. Jerome*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series 6 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 457.

[8] haec massa si esset ita media, ut quem ad modum nihil boni ita nec mali aliquid mereretur, non frustra uideretur iniquitas, ut ex ea fierent uasa in contumeliam; cum uero per liberum arbitrium primi hominis in condemnationem ex uno uniuersa defluxerit, procul dubio, quod ex ea fiunt uasa in honorem, non ipsius iustitiae, quae gratiam nulla praecessit, sed dei misericordiae, quod uero in contumeliam, non iniquitati dei, quae absit ut sit apud deum, sed iudicio deputandum est. Augustine, Letter 186, par. 6, ed. A. Goldbacher, *CSEL* 57 (Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1911), 64; trans. Roland Teske, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: Letters 156-210,* ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2004), 218.

that is, if there is no reason for this disgrace on account of the quality of the material, which is the same."[9]

Likewise, Chapter One on the Orthodox Baptistery contained an extended analysis of a sermon by John Chrysostom in which the work of goldsmiths was contrasted with the work of ceramicists. Inverting expectations, Chrysostom argued that work executed in a base material could be more impressive than work executed in a precious material if the skill of the artist was great enough to compensate for the banal nature of the clay. There was, then, a sense that making, if well done, could compensate for any inherent limitations in the material.[10] It was the actions brought to bear on materials that transformed them from ordinary substances into evocative works of art.

Throughout this study, I have discussed materials and materiality,[11] but ultimately, I have emphasized acts of mediation as bearers of meaning in medieval art. The fact that stucco is made from a liquid mixture of lime or gypsum, water, and sand has

[9] Et hoc etiam EX EADEM MASSA terrae, hoc est si nulla sit huius contumeliae causa ex qualitate materiae, quae est eadem. FIGVLVS LVTI, id est formator humidae et mollis terrae, non creator ipsius materiae. Peter Abelard, *Commentaria in epistulam Pauli ad Romanos*, 4.9.233–235, ed. E.M. Buytaert, *CCCM* 11 (1969); Trans. Steven R. Cartwright, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Fathers of the Church Medieval Continuation (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 295.

[10] For a discussion of the concept of *opus* in Theophilus and twelfth-century metalwork objects see: Joseph Salvatore Ackley, "Copper-Alloy Substrates in Precious-Metal Treasury Objects: Concealed and Yet Excessive," *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspective on Medieval Art* 4 (2014): 2–7.

[11] The terms "material" and "materiality" are often used interchangeably. Anthropologist Daniel Miller posed the question "What is materiality?" in his introduction to an edited volume on the topic. He immediately elided the difference between material and materiality in the next sentence by answering: "A volume that spans topics as diverse as cosmology and finance cannot afford to rest upon any simplistic definition of what we mean by the word *material*." (his emphasis). In contrast, in an essay on the materiality of sculpture, Michael Cole insisted on "few topics in the history of sculpture have seen as much success in recent years as those relating to 'materials' and 'materiality.'" By invoking both, Cole implies that the two terms are not identical, but must be treated as separate but related concepts. He does not explain what that distinction is, however. I argue that it is imperative to distinguish between the two terms. As defined in the Introduction, in this dissertation "material" refers to the physical substances from which works of art are made, but "materiality" refers to historicized matter. For another argument in favor of distinguishing materials from materiality, see Ingold's chapter "Materials against materiality" in his 2011 book. Daniel Miller, "Materiality: An Introduction," in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005) 5; Michael Cole, "The Cult of Materials," in Clerbois and Droth, *Revival and Invention*, 1; Ingold, *Being Alive*, 19–32.

only been important insofar as that mixture lent itself to certain techniques and presentation strategies. In Chapter One, it was the modeled nature of the material that enabled a conceptual link to the mud in Genesis. In Chapter Two, the act of assembling individual components cast separately in molds and then combining them into an aggregate arch provided a visual metaphor for a theological concept. Chapters Three and Four each focused on issues of contextualization, which is a form of mediation that differs slightly from technique. In Chapter Three, the isolation of individual figures on piers and the rendering of the figures in deep, sculptural relief enabled the *Westwerk*'s makers to endow their monument with a sense of history by association with antique forms. In Chapter Four, the position of the stucco angels covering the vault of a chapel, a place where eleventh-century viewers were more likely to see a fresco than a relief, inflected the meaning of the program.

By locating meaning not in raw materials but in the actions used to shape and exhibit materials, this study has sought to provide a model for theorizing matter that foregrounds human agents as makers of art. Much recent theoretical work in art history and related fields has emphasized the autonomy and agency of objects in ways that increasingly isolate (or some might say liberate) inanimate materials and things from human involvement.[12] However, this study has argued for the need to keep the question

[12] The most frequently cited theoretical model for approaching the subject of object autonomy or the capacity of inanimate things to have an impact on the world apart from the immediate influence of a human agent is Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency*. More recently, Jane Bennett, a political scientist, has argued for an ethical imperative to pay attention to matter, especially after it has passed from the forefront of human attention, such as garbage disposed in a landfill. Bennett's argument is based on the idea that even though people might perceive matter to be inanimate, materials are rarely fully inactive. For example, disposed garbage continues to decompose and release gases into the atmosphere having an impact on human life, even though most people tend to ignore it. In medieval art history, Valerie Allen has noted the importance of objects as guarantees of social contracts between people, arguing that "social acts are performed by objects as much as they are by face-to-face encounters." Patricia Cox Miller has also applied thing theory to Late Antique relics and icons. Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, (Oxford:

of human acts of mediation at the center of the discussion of medieval materiality. This also means examining materials within their historical contexts. Only by understanding the unique social, cultural, and historical conditions that shaped the human beings who made art in the early Middle Ages, can the ways in which people interacted with and ascribed meanings to their materials be elucidated.

Oxford University Press, 1998); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Valerie Allen, "On the Nature of Things in the Bayeux Tapestry and Its World," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations,* eds. Martin Foys, Karen Overbey, and Dan Terkla (Tochester, N.Y.: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), 51–70; Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), esp. 1–7. For an overview of the disciplinary trend see: Karen Eileen Overbey and Benjamin C. Tilghman, "Active Objects: An Introduction," *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspective on Medieval Art* 4 (2014): 1–9.

Appendix

The Date of the St. Ulrich Chapel Reliefs

Compared to the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna, the *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale, or the *Westwerk* in Corvey, which have each been the subject of extended art-historical and archaeological studies, the existing scholarship on the St. Ulrich Chapel in Müstair is very limited. The Chapel in Müstair has never been the sole focus of a study of any length, and with the exception of Jean Wirth's essay on Mals and Müstair, references to the Chapel in the literature are restricted to one or two sentences that make brief observations about the style or date. What is more, not all scholars agree on the date of the reliefs. The uncertainty is due largely to the fact that almost no historical documents have been preserved that relate to the monastery at Müstair before the twelfth century. As a result, arguments about the date of the St. Ulrich Chapel must rely exclusively on stylistic comparisons, and art-historical opinion is divided between two moments of heightened artistic activity at the monastery in Müstair. The first happened in the late 1080s under the direction of Bishop Norpert (1079–1088),[1] which is the date accepted by the present study, and the second in the late 1160s under Bishop Egino (1163–1170).[2] This Appendix supplements the argument posited in Chapter Four by surveying the existing literature on the date of the St. Ulrich Chapel's reliefs.

As outlined in Chapter Four, the argument for an eleventh-century date of the reliefs in the St. Ulrich Chapel rests primarily on stylistic comparisons with the Baptism

[1] Deschamps, "A propos des pierres," 268; Grzimek, *Deutsche Stuckplastik*, 47; Wirth, "Bemerkungen zu den Stifterbildern," 85.

[2] Zemp and Durrer, *Das Kloster St. Johann*, 41–55; Poeschel, *Die Täler am Vorderrhein*, 348.

of Christ panel in the main church [see Fig. 109]. Art historians have overwhelmingly attributed Müstair's Baptism panel to the end of the eleventh century on stylistic grounds.[3] If a relationship could be demonstrated between the Baptism panel and the St. Ulrich Chapel, then an argument could be made for dating the Chapel's reliefs to the late eleventh century as well.

Stylistic comparisons between the chancel barrier and the Chapel are complicated by the fact that the figures and ornamental motifs on the Baptism panel are rendered on a smaller scale than those in the Chapel. Consequently, details like the drapery folds appear more compressed on the chancel barrier figures than they are on the angels in the Chapel. The small ornamental frieze at the top of the Baptism panel is also shallower and sketchier than the large ornamental bands on the arches in the Chapel. Nonetheless, some points of comparison do exist. The curls on the napes of the necks of the figures in the Baptism scene resemble the angels' curls in the Chapel.[4] The treatment of the hands, especially the way the joints on the fingers have each been rendered with a single, straight indent, also suggests that the figures on the chancel barrier and those in the St. Ulrich Chapel could be contemporaneous with each other [see Fig. 116].

Another stylistic argument for dating the St. Ulrich Chapel's decorative program to the late eleventh century can be made by comparing the Chapel's reliefs to those in the church of San Pietro al Monte in Civate. In an early study, Julius Baum observed stylistic similarities between the figures on the Müstair Baptism panel and the figural

[3] Zemp and Durrer, *Das Kloster St. Johann*, 44; Poeschel, *Die Täler am Vorderrhein*, 310; Deschamps, "A propos des pierres," 267; Grzimek, *Deutsche Stuckplastik*, 46; Goll, "Relief," 216.

[4] Wirth, "Bemerkungen zu den Stifterbildern," 85.

stucco tympana in the Civate crypt.[5] Parallels also exist between the ornamental motifs at the two sites.[6] Stuccoed arches at San Pietro al Monte and in the St. Ulrich Chapel have rows of leaves where the individual blades are connected by U-bends with the points of each "U" almost touching to form a circle [see Fig. 101, Fig. 126]. Likewise, on four foliated column capitals inside the entrance to San Pietro al Monte, the tips of the leaves droop down into clusters of teardrop-shaped loops, similar to the way the tips of some of the leaves in Müstair are formed [Fig. 127]. The Baptism panel, the St. Ulrich Chapel, and the stucco reliefs in Civate all seem to have been produced around the same time in the late eleventh century.

There may also be historical reasons to date the St. Ulrich Chapel reliefs to the late eleventh century, though these are purely speculative. Before being elected bishop of Chur, Norpert served as the cathedral provost in Augsburg, where, as mentioned in Chapter Four, the Ottonian bishop-saint, St. Ulrich (ca. 890–973), was recognized as an important patron of the city. Norpert's connection to Augsburg may have inspired him to dedicate a chapel to St. Ulrich after he became a bishop of Chur and took up residence at Müstair.[7] However, using similar reasoning, one could also argue that the dedication occurred during the episcopacy of Norpert's successor and rival, Ulrich II von Tarasp (1089–1096), who may have wished to have a chapel dedicated to his saintly namesake, or even later under Ulrich's successor, Wido (1096–1122), who, like Norpert, served as

[5] Julius Baum, "Bermerkungen zu Galliano, Basel, Civate," in vol. 1 of *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, ed. Wilhelm Koehler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 174-175.

[6] Grzimek, *Deutsche Stuckplastik*, 47; Marcora, *Gli stucchi*, 91, 119-122.

[7] Wirth, "Bemerkungen zu den Stifterbildern," 84–85; Clavadetscher and Kundert, "Das Bistum Chur," 474.

the cathedral provost in Augsburg before becoming bishop of Chur.[8] Although the attribution to Norpert is persuasive, definitively identifying the specific person who commissioned the program in the St. Ulrich Chapel would require a more detailed historical record than what has survived. For this reason, the archaeological team engaged by the Stiftung Pro Kloster St. Johann currently states on their website that the reliefs in the St. Ulrich Chapel date to around 1100 without attempting to pinpoint a more specific year.[9] Goll, the archaeologist who has worked most extensively on different building phases at Müstair, has cautioned that a date after 1100 for the St. Ulrich Chapel's reliefs should not be ruled out.[10]

However, arguments that place the reliefs in the mid- to late-twelfth century are less convincing than those in favor of the late eleventh. The first scholar to discuss the St. Ulrich Chapel reliefs, Josef Zemp, argued for a date in the 1160s based on a stylistic comparison with the stucco Charlemagne at Müstair.[11] Zemp thought the Charlemagne figure was made around 1165 when the early Carolingian king was canonized, a move promoted by Frederick I Barbarossa (r. 1155–1190). Bishop Egino, as Barbarossa's supporter and friend, would have commissioned the statue to celebrate the canonization.[12] Zemp considered the treatment of the drapery on the Charlemagne figure to be comparable to the angels' garments in the St. Ulrich Chapel, and so he also attributed the St. Ulrich Chapel to the middle of the twelfth century. The twelfth-century

[8] Clavatdescher and Kundert, "Das Bistum Chur," 475.

[9] "Geschichte und Forschung: 1035. Bau der Bischofsresidenz," *Kloster St. Johann Müstair: UNESCO Welterbe*, accessed August 10, 2015, http://www.muestair.ch/klosteranlage/geschichte-und-forschung/hoehepunkte-in-der-ueber-1200jaehrigen-klostergeschichte/1035-bau-der-bischofsresidenz/.

[10] Jürg Goll (Leiter Archäologie, Bauhütte, Müstair) in discussion with the author, September 2015.

[11] Zemp and Durrer, *Das Kloster St. Johann*, 41.

[12] Clavatdescher and Kundert, "Das Bistum Chur," 476.

date for the stucco Charlemagne is, however, debatable.[13] In particular, the figure lacks a halo, an attribute that would no doubt have been included if it was intended as a monument to the canonization.[14]

All other arguments that the St. Ulrich Chapel's program dates to the mid-twelfth century are based on circumstantial evidence. The monastery at Müstair underwent important changes during the twelfth century, including institutional reforms spearheaded by Bishop Adelgott of Chur (1151–1160) around 1157.[15] At some point before 1170, the monastery was also converted from a male cloister to a female one.[16] When exactly this transpired is unknown, but the change may have been made in conjunction with Adelgott's reforms. Several artistic commissions marked the cloister's new character as a female institution. For example, Beat Brenk has convincingly linked the Romanesque

[13] Beutler has suggested the most radical date for the Charlemagne statue, placing it in the early ninth century and linking the figure to the foundation of the monastery in the Carolingian period. His argument has been widely, though not universally, rejected. The tradition linking Charlemagne to the foundation of the cloister in Müstair seems to have been a later invention, as the earliest concrete historical evidence identifying Charlemagne as the founder comes from 1394. The Carolingian king's direct involvement in the early history of the cloister remains unsubstantiated, but some scholars still argue for it. Beutler, *Statua*, 212–230; For a summary of the debate over Charlemagne's role as founder, see Hans-Rudolf Sennhauser, "Kloster Müstair, Gründungszeit und Karlstradition," in *König–Kirche–Adel. Herrschaftsstrukturen im mitteleren Alpenraum; Tagung Schloss Goldrain 17–21.6.1998,* ed. Rainer Loose and Sönke Lorenz (Lana: Tappeiner, 1999), 125–150.

[14] The halo could have been damaged or lost when the statue was moved in 1488 or it could have been originally painted on the wall behind the relief, but for the reasons outlined in Chapter Three, I believe the painted halo hypothesis is unlikely.

[15] … Ea propter notum sit ominibus tam presentis quam futuri evi Christi fidelibus, qualiter venerabilis frater noster Algotus Curiensis episcopus tria claustra sue dioceseos tam religion ac sancta conversacione quam facultatum propria largicione instaurando ad divini cultus servicium direxerit, et ne de temporalibus rebus aliquam sustinerent molestiam, ecclesias curtes et aliquas decimaciones intuit divine clemencie usibus eorum mancipaverit. … In tercio vero claustro quod Monasterium nuncupatur, ubi ex pravorum hominum insolencia sancta omnino fatescebat religio, domino solaciante sancte conversacionis in tantum reformavit statum, ut et karitate ferveant et in sancte religionis proposito incessabiliter maneant. Meyer-Marthaler and Perret, *Bündner Urkundenbuch*, nr. 337.

[16] An inscription on a bell excavated from the site reads: "·+DVLCEM [· DAT S]ONVM · VENIAT ·□ PIA ·□TURBA ·□SORORUM·" Even though the earliest unequivocal evidence that the cloister had been converted to a convent dates to sometime shortly before 1170 (see footnote 19 below), the bell may indicate that the cloister had already become a female institution by as early as the first half of the twelfth century. Adriano Boschetti-Maradi, "Eine romanische Schlagglocke," in vol. 3 of *Müstair, Kloster St. Johann*, ed. Hans-Rudolf Sennhauser (Zurich: Hochschulverlag AG an der ETH, 2005), 127–128.

frescoes in the main church to the switch and dated the frescoes to between 1157 and 1170.[17] Shortly before 1170, Bishop Egino also donated the entire bishop's residence at Müstair to the nuns.[18] The diploma recording the transfer of ownership is the earliest historical document that mentions the St. Ulrich and Nicholas Chapels by name.[19] When the nuns took possession of the west wing, a fresco cycle depicting scenes from the life of Christ was added to the north room on the ground floor of the residence, which stands diagonal from the St. Ulrich Chapel.[20] The redecoration of the Chapel with stucco reliefs and frescoes could have hypothetically occurred at the same time that the frescoes in the adjacent room were added, though this seems unlikely since the 1170 diploma seems to indicate that the chapel was already consecrated before the nuns took possession of the residence. Finally, the dedication to St. Ulrich may have been intended to flatter a prominent secular lord, Ulrich III von Tarasp (r. 1146–1177), who was the grandnephew of Bishop Ulrich II von Tarasp and who made donations to the cloister at Müstair in the middle of the twelfth century.[21] The arguments for a twelfth-century date, therefore, rest on a string of incidental observations: institutional changes were occurring in the cloister, other artistic projects were being undertaken elsewhere at the site, and the monastery was receiving support from a local lord named Ulrich. These facts alone do not provide sufficient proof that the decorative program in the St. Ulrich Chapel dates to the middle

[17] Beat Brenk, *Die Romanische Wandmalerei in der Schweiz* (Bern: Francke, 1963), 61.

[18] Sennhauser, "Klosterpfalz," 21, 26.

[19] Universis ecclesie filiis tam futuris quam presentibus notum sit, quales possessions dominus Egeno Curiensis ecclesie episcopus cum consilio Egenonis eiusdem ecclesie advocate nec baronum necnon et ministerialium delegavit abbatisse ecclesie sancti Iohannis Baptiste in Monasterio. … servicium consuetum de placito advocate non de curte abbatisse, set a ministro episcopi exigatur; capellam sancte Crucis cum omni iure, capellam sancte Marię in Siluaplana cum omni iure, capellam sancti Nicolai et sancti Ůdalrici cum dote sua… Meyer-Marthaler and Perret, *Bündner Urkundenbuch*, nr. 375.

[20] Weber, "Die romanischen Wandmalereien," 29–30; Goll, "Das Kloster St. Johann," 34.

[21] Müller, *Die Herren*, 105.

of the twelfth century. For these reasons, the mid-twelfth century date is less convincing than the eleventh; the St. Ulrich Chapel's decorative program was most likely added during the last decades of the eleventh century.

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EDUCATION

2016	Ph.D. History of Art, Johns Hopkins University
2010	M.A. History of Art, Johns Hopkins University
2008	B.A. Art History (major) and Archaeology (minor), Stanford University With honors in Art History, Phi Beta Kappa

PUBLICATIONS

2014	"'Cast Not to the Beasts the Souls that Confess You' – Images of Mouths at the Cathedral of St. Lazare at Autun," *The Rutgers Art Review* 29 (2014): 4–21.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2014-2016	Samuel H. Kress Institutional Fellowship in the History of Art, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich
2014	The Dean's Teaching Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University
2013	The Singleton Center for the Study of Pre-Modern Europe Dissertation Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University
2013	The Robert and Nancy Hall Curatorial Fellowship, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD
2013	The Robert and Nancy Hall Teaching Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University
2009	The Hodson Fellowship in the Humanities, Johns Hopkins University
2008-2011	The Owen Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University
2008	Robert M. Golden Medal for Excellence in Humanities Scholarship and the Creative Arts, Stanford University
2008	The Humanities Award in Art History, Stanford University

CONFERENCES

2016	College Art Association Annual Conference, Washington D.C.

	"Protoplasts and Prophets: The Stucco Reliefs in the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna"
2015	Forum Kunst des Mittelalters, Hildesheim, Germany "Reimagining the Carolingian Past in the Westwerk at Corvey"
2015	Institut für Kunstwissenschaft und Historische Urbanistik, Berlin, Germany "Materials, Techniques, and Meanings of the Monumental Stucco Reliefs in Eighth-Century Cividale del Friuli"
2015	Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich, Germany "Color and Relief: The Boundaries between Painting and Sculpture in Eleventh-Century Müstair"
2014	International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI *Material Metamorphoses* (organizer of session)
2014	International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI "Brilliant Blankness: Polychromy in the Ulrichskapelle in Müstair"
2014	Medieval Academy of America Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA "Crossing the Alps: Horseshoe Arches on an Eighth-Century Highway"
2013	International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI "Making Images in the Tempietto Longobardo"
2009	Vagantes Graduate Medieval Conference, Tallahassee, FL "Words and Images in the North Portal of St. Lazare at Autun"

TEACHING

2014	Medieval Renaissances (instructor of record)
2013	Gifts and Thefts in the Middle Ages (instructor of record)
2012	Modernism and Postmodernism in Architecture (teaching assistant)
2012	Surveying Paris: Museums, Monuments, and Cultural Memory (intersession course in Paris, teaching assistant)
2011	History of Roman Art and Architecture (teaching assistant)
2010	Passion Cult, Passion Image, Passion Drama (teaching assistant)
2009	Introduction to the History of European Art (teaching assistant)

MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

2013	Curatorial Fellow, Department of Medieval Art, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore
2009	Research Assistant, Johns Hopkins Archaeological Collection, Baltimore

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

2012-2013	History of Art Graduate Student Committee Advocate, Johns Hopkins University
2012-2013	History of Art Internal Symposium Organizer, Johns Hopkins University
2009-2010	Graduate Student Lecture Series in the History of Art Organizer, Johns Hopkins University

LANGUAGES

English (native speaker), German (excellent), Italian (excellent), French (reading proficiency), Latin (reading proficiency and working knowledge of medieval paleography)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

The College Art Association, The Medieval Academy of America, The International Center for Medieval Art, Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, Delaware Valley Medieval Association, Italian Art Society